



Indira Gandhi
National Open University
School of Education

BESE-066
Adolescence and
Family Education

Block

3

FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

UNIT10

Concept of Family in Indian Context **5**

UNIT11

Family Life Education — Concept and Importance **19**

UNIT12

Role of Home, School and Religion **43**

UNIT13

Building and Sustaining Family Relationships **57**

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BLOCK 3 FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Introduction to the Block

The four units contained in this block provide a comprehensive view of the concept, meaning and importance of family life education as well as the role of various agencies like home, school and religion in imparting family life education.

Unit 10 **“Concept of Family in Indian Context”** discusses family as a fundamental unit of the society. It also highlights the traditional joint family system in India and discusses the changes in family system with respect to childhood and adolescence.

Unit 11 **“Family Life Education — Concept and Importance”** discusses the importance of family life education for the healthy development of the society and this unit describes the specific objectives of family life education.

Unit 12 **“Role of Home, School and Religion”** discusses significant role of these agencies in family life education. Various methods for imparting family life education are also discussed in this unit.

BESE-066 ADOLESCENCE AND FAMILY EDUCATION

Block 1 Adolescence

- Unit 1 Understanding the Adolescent (Physical, Cognitive and Social Development)
 - Unit 2 Behavioural Pattern of Adolescents
 - Unit 3 Common Concerns of Adolescents
 - Unit 4 Role and Function of Teachers and School for Guiding Adolescents
-

Block 2 Life Skills Based Education and Objectives

- Unit 5 Basic Concept and Objectives of Life Skills Education
 - Unit 6 Sexual Health Education
 - Unit 7 Sex, Gender and Sexuality
 - Unit 8 Core Life Skills
 - Unit 9 Role, Functions and Responsibility of Teachers
-

Block 3 Family Life Education

- Unit 10 Concept of Family in Indian Context
 - Unit 11 Family Life Education - Concept and Importance
 - Unit 12 Role of Home, School and Religion
 - Unit 13 Building and Sustaining Family Relationships
-

Block 4 Capacity Building

- Unit 14 Value-based Interventions in Schools for Adolescent and Family Health
 - Unit 15 Value-based Interventions in Teacher Education Institutions
 - Unit 16 Health and Hygiene Programmes in School
 - Unit 17 Dealing with Situations of Co-education in Schools
-

UNIT 10 CONCEPT OF FAMILY IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Structure

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Objectives
- 10.3 Family: Some Basic Concepts
 - 10.3.1 Features of Family
 - 10.3.2 Forms/Types of Family
 - 10.3.3 Functions of Family
- 10.4 Family in India
 - 10.4.1 Joint Family
 - 10.4.2 Nuclear Family
 - 10.4.3 Extended Family
- 10.5 Changing Indian Family
 - 10.5.1 Factors of Change
 - 10.5.2 Process of Change
 - 10.5.3 Persistence of the Indian Family
- 10.6 Childhood in the Changing Context
 - 10.6.1 Child Rearing Practices
 - 10.6.2 Segregation of Child's World from Adults
 - 10.6.3 Absence of Wider Emotional Connection
 - 10.6.4 Pressure of Parental Expectation
 - 10.6.5 Socialisation by Other Agencies
 - 10.6.6 Early Individuation of Child
 - 10.6.7 Discrimination Against Girl Child
- 10.7 Future of Indian Family
- 10.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 10.9 Unit-end Exercises
- 10.10 Suggested Readings
- 10.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Family is a word understood by all. We all belong to families and start our own families. We get both material and non-material sustenance from them. Family is considered the basic component of human society because it performs the important functions of procreation and socialisation, and is found in almost all societies in some form or the other. Our focus in this unit is to study the nature and type of the family

in India and the changes that it is undergoing in the general process of social change. Before that, we will take a brief look at the concept of family in general.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, you will read about Family as the fundamental unit of society. It is a systematic group of the most primordial relationships. We shall focus on the structure and functions of family, and then discuss it in the Indian context. After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the concept of family and its dimensions;
- discuss the features of traditional joint family system in India;
- examine the process of change in this system;
- discuss childhood and adolescence in the context of a joint family and a nuclear family;
- examine the prospects of Indian family in future.

10.3 FAMILY : SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

Burgess and Locke have defined Family as "a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household, interacting and communicating with each other in their respective roles as husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister and creating and maintaining a common culture. Although there are many other definitions, this one summarises the essential character of a family.

10.3.1 Features of Family

Family influences the entire life of an individual and maintains the stability of society. Capable of endless variations, family has shown remarkable continuity and persistence through ages, revealing some distinctive features. It is a part of all social institutions nearly universally, having existed in all societies across all stages of historical development. Family has an **emotional basis**, providing for love, care, security and support to all members. Its **small size** facilitates interaction among members. It is a **closed group**, i.e., membership is through birth or marriage only. Providing the earliest social environment, it has significant formative influence over the character and personality of members. It is the **nucleus of social organization** in all societies—simple or complex. Members in a family have **unlimited responsibility** towards each other. Family is **regulated by society** through social taboos and legal sanctions like rules of marriage and legitimacy of children. A family comprises of **certain norms**, i.e., specific rules of behaviour, prescribed or conventional and cherishes certain **values** explicit or implicit that it transmits to the next generation.

10.3.2 Forms/Types of Family

Family can be categorized in various ways. Depending on the primacy of the type of bond, it can be *conjugal* and *consanguine*. A conjugal family is based on marital or "conjugal" bond between the husband and his wife. It is also called as nuclear family.

The consanguine family is based on blood relationship of kinspersons. It is an extended clan of blood relatives together with their spouses and children.

Family can also be *matrilineal* and *patrilineal*. In the matrilineal family, the descent (name) and inheritance are transmitted through the female line. In the patrilineal family, on the other hand, descent and inheritance are through the male members. Patrilineal families are also '**patriarchal**': power, authority and status rest with the male head of the family. Women have lower status. However, matrilineal families need not be matriarchal, although the status of women is higher in them.

We usually categorise family as nuclear, joint and extended. The smallest family unit consisting of a husband, wife and their unmarried children is known as the nuclear family. Joint family is a term applied in Indian context to a family where members of vertical and horizontal extensions live together. For example, an old couple, their unmarried sons and daughters, married sons and daughters-in-law, grandchildren and some other relatives too. The main is living and eating in the same house/kitchen. Extended family includes members related by blood or marriage not necessarily living together — brothers/sisters of father and mother their children, in laws etc.

10.3.3 Functions of Family

Family performs certain fundamental and unique functions for society as well as individuals that are mostly inseparable. It performs the **sexual regulation function** by allowing husband and wife sexual access to each other and, at the same time, prohibiting sexual indulgence out of marriage. Family also has the **reproductive function** of producing children whom society accepts as legitimate.

The most important function of family is **socialisation** of children during which the child learns about norms and values of society, family living and social interaction, and becomes aware about various roles. After this process of primary socialisation has crystallized in the person, family works to stabilize the adult personality.

Societies depend on family to provide for **emotional security**, love, care and companionship to old and young members. Family provides a protective environment to the child facilitating his/her overall growth. Family also performs the **economic function** of providing the basic necessities to all its members, including the non-earning ones.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1. Define family. What are its essential features?

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2. Define (i) Nuclear Family (ii) Joint Family (iii) Extended Family

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3. Discuss the main functions of family.
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10.4 FAMILY IN INDIA

In India, family is of special significance in every person's life, One's actions are good if they benefit the family, otherwise they are despicable. One's family is liable to be held responsible for one's wrong deeds. Family in India serves as a moral community, a productive enterprise and a support group to its members (Stern, 1993). The predominant form of family is the traditional 'joint family'. It is a feature of agrarian societies where joint living of members under a single roof is the norm. Ties of common ancestry and common property bind them together. Most Indian families are patriarchal and patrilineal in nature though matrilineal family system exists in some parts, like Kerala and tribes like the Khasis of Meghalaya. We also find the extended family (also called stem family), Joint Family and the nuclear family in India.

10.4.1 Joint Family

The term 'joint family' was coined by Sir Henry Maine to describe patrilineal type of extended family where all the male members held joint ownership rights over the family property. Iravati Karve (1965), an authority on marriage, family and kinship patterns in India, defines it as 'a group of people, who generally live under one roof, eat food cooked at one hearth, hold property in common, participate in common worship and are related to each other in some particular kind of kindred'.

The jointness of a family is reflected in many aspects. **Commensality** (eating from the same kitchen) and **common residence** are taken as defining features in the Census definition of a joint family. However, in many cases, due to compulsions of large family size, the married brothers might have to extend their dwelling unit and set up separate kitchens. The most definite criterion, according to law, is the **joint ownership of property**. The family exists more as a **sentiment** and a set of mutual obligations between members. This is reinforced by periodic family **rituals** such as annual 'shraddha' or propitiation of ancestors, worship of family deity, and pollution rituals during birth and death etc., besides, family festivals like marriages. The family acts as a **unit of production and consumption** where all members are involved. Nuclear Family is also a unit of both production and consumption. It is different from Joint in that it is limited in memberships and income/expenditure refer to only the husband/wife and no others.

Joint family existed predominantly in pre-industrial societies. It exists today in agriculture-based societies like India. Usually the family is large, owns land and property, and shares economic functions. It has a familistic organisation, i.e., the family defines the goals of individuals. The family consciousness and collective conscience make it different from a nuclear family. Family is the link to the wider society through kinship network, and is the principal unit of social organisation

(Mandelbaum, 1970). The authority rests with the male head of the family. His decisions are not open to dissent. The status of members is determined by their generation, age and relationship: elder men have higher status than younger men whose status in turn is higher than that of women. Filial or consanguine bonds (between brothers/between father and son) are preferred over conjugal bonds. There is separation of spheres for men and women. Women are restricted to the households.

Merits

The joint family is ideally suited for land-based rural families for its economic, social and psychological advantages. The joint operation of property allows increased efficiency of pooled labour and economies of a single kitchen and household (Mandelbaum, 1970). It provides for efficient geriatric and childcare, as there are many women to look after them. This enables mothers to work in fields or do household work. Children grow up with care, love and affection from grand parents, uncles, aunts, cousins etc., besides their own parents. Joint family is an ideal setting to learn virtues of co-operation and collective living for the young people. This strengthens stability in larger society too. Pooled resources enable the family to avert any crisis or need. Family festivals and occasions can be celebrated more elegantly, enhancing the prestige of all the members. In general, joint family ensures the happiness and well-being of all its members.

Joint families may also own industries/business (besides agriculture). There are many well known industry/business houses running their enterprises jointly owned them by brothers etc. in a Joint Family.

Drawbacks

The system is not without disadvantages though. Since the system is essentially patriarchal, authority rests with men. Women in general have a low status and are often excluded from decision-making. There is little freedom for junior male members. The family, more based on tradition, may not be open to change or accepting new elements. The weight of the family is heavy on young couples who hardly have the space to cultivate a conjugal bond. It hinders the process of individual freedom.

There may be Joint Families in the matriarchal system also where mother/sister (often the youngest sister owns) live together with their spouses and children and the mother is the Head of the family.

10.4.2 Nuclear Family

Considered the most elementary family, the nuclear family is a product of shift from agricultural society to industrial society. This is also called the modern democratic family. Nuclear family grows out of joint/extended family when there is migration from village to city for employment or other reasons where joint family is not possible due to paucity of needed larger residential accommodation, different occupation etc. That is why it is mainly seen in urban areas, cities and metropolis.

Nuclear families may also exist in rural areas because the joint family cannot go on indefinitely owing to physical and social limitations. There is a limit to the number of people a house can accommodate and thus, there is bound to be fission into smaller nuclear families in the family cycle of development (Mandelbaum, 1970). There are other reasons too. Among agricultural labourers or low caste artisans (Cohn, 1961),

who have little or no land to operate, joint living is not needed. Fight over scarce resources and food makes joint family unfeasible. Poverty, short life span women's wage, employment outside home etc.; are some other factors that make the existence of joint families difficult. This unclarity is often due to such negative rather than any positive causes (Singh, 1986).

Merits

Unlike the joint family, there is greater degree of freedom for spouses in the nuclear family. The status of the woman is higher and she often takes up employment outside the home. The material well-being of children, such as healthcare and education, is higher because of more resources available. Nuclear families are adaptable to social change.

Drawbacks

The nuclear family misses all the advantages of joint living. It is too isolated and unconnected to elicit support or assistance during need or crisits. Its limited size poses practical problems for child rearing and care, more so when the mother works outside. Children are deprived of a wider social world, emotional bonding, love and affection that a joint family provides. The old parents are left in the village or old age homes without personal care. We will discuss these in detail in the later sections.

10.4.3 Extended Family

This refers to a family system that extends to several generations of people related by blood/marriage. The members may not be living together. That happens only in joint Families. A simple example is a man, his wife and dependent children (nuclear family) along with grand parents living with them. It is different from Joint in the sense all member do not live together in one house. They are related by blood or marriage.

This has some of the advantages of joint family such as emotional and material security for the old people, freedom for wife to work outside as children are looked after by grand parents. On the other hand, it may witness tension and strain in relationship between old parents and their son and daughter-in-law who would prefer to have their freedom and authority intact.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

4. What is the most prevalent family system in India? Discuss its merits and drawbacks.

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10.5 CHANGING INDIAN FAMILY

Family as a social institution has undergone historical evolution and is witnessing changes in structure and function even to this day. Many changes have taken place in the Indian joint family. We see many 'alternative family patterns' like single parent families, childless families, adoptive families and dual career families etc., due to personal or socio-economic circumstances. However, the change is largely understood in the context of the disintegration of traditional joint family and **shift towards the modern nuclear family**. Nuclear families are no doubt growing in number, especially in urban centres, giving an impression that the joint family is gradually disappearing. However, the process exhibits a lot of diversity and interesting features.

A recent phenomenon which is being observed in the society is the increase in the number of single parent families. A single parent family is characterized by the fact that single (man/woman) either separated/divorced, widow or widower is involved in the upbringing of children.

The factors responsible for bringing about change in the traditional joint family are being discussed below:

10.5.1 Factors of Change

The main factors responsible for change in the joint family system are **industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation**, which are inter linked. With industrialisation, there is growth of urban centres and consequent movement of people from villages to cities. This process brings in a new pattern of living- **urban living** characterised by dense population, diversification and specialisation of occupation, division of labour, anonymous and isolated surroundings. It also increases competition for resources and struggle for better living.

Increase in **educational opportunities** and **occupational choices** allow people to move from agriculture-based occupations to non-agricultural, industrial or service-based occupations. These require separation of residence from ancestral village and setting up of small homes with wife and children in the town or urban centre. Even when people do not have to shift to towns, their villages are getting urbanised and coming under the direct reach of markets. Differential earnings by brothers and the desire to set up one's own home for a more comfortable living is working towards disintegration of joint families. With increased earnings and availability of modern technology, one does not have to depend on collective labour to do farming.

With **fragmentation of landholdings and release of joint property**, joint family is no longer a need or compulsion. Especially, the marginal farmers and landless labourer classes have no incentive to live together in joint families as for them joint living does not ensure any security. The stress of poverty and economic difficulties faced by rural people pushes them towards cities. The struggle for survival being hard, they can only bring their views and children along with them.

Education and empowerment of women also play a significant role in the change. As women get educated and seek jobs in various sectors at par with men, their status is enhanced. They prefer to settle down in cities or near their work places away from the joint home.

Besides, the growth of individualism and breakdown of traditional value systems are also important factors leading to nuclear families (T.K. Oommen, 1982). In fact, the process of change in family organisation started with the advent of the British who brought in the ideas of liberalism and individualism (Kapadia, 1966). Individualism entails the freedom of individual in decision making, desire to acquire personal wealth and property, establish separate home after marriage, educate one's children in good schools etc. It works against the spirit of joint family.

The **celebration of nuclear family** by the State for the purpose of population control also undermines the idea of joint family. The picture of a man, his wife and a son and a daughter, presented as the 'happy family', is embedded in the culture as a norm. People start thinking that the small family or nuclear family is the happy family.

10.5.2 Processes of Change

What is the exact nature of change in the joint family system? There have been changes in the family system in terms of size, role, relationships and power distribution in family. The change is in the form of a **shift from consanguine to conjugal family**. However, it is multi-dimensional in nature. It encompasses changes in structure, function and interaction. Size of families are growing smaller. Large joint families are becoming extended (either or both the grand parents staying with the family), and joint families are getting nuclear. It has an impact on family composition, co-residence, and ownership of property. There is a decline in social roles in families with socialisation roles being shared by other agencies such as peer groups, schools and media.

There are changes in the internal structure of families too. The relationships among the family members have also changed with changes in family obligations, decision-making power, socialisation practices and child-rearing practices. The central authority of the eldest male is weakening and there is a reworking of power and authority among family members. The wife now has a greater power in affairs of her home and in decision-making. Parental authority over children has reduced. Children enjoy more freedom to choose their lives, and are consulted in decision-making process. The change is vivid in urban areas. There are simultaneous changes in the traditional value system too. Values like respect for the old and the elderly, care and concern for the weak and the needy, co-operation, service etc, are being replaced by modern values of individual freedom, personal lives, non-interference and so on.

10.5.3 Persistence of the Indian Family

Is then the joint family disintegrating? Are nuclear families becoming the norm in Indian society? The process is far from simple because studies have shown that the traditional family still survives. According to Sinha (1994), Indian joint family is in a transitional **phase** whereby though it is assuming a nuclear form, yet it continues to show certain aspects related to traditional families. For instance, although the members get independent financially and separate their kitchen and household, they live in the same house or close to each other.

There is also an argument that **nuclear family does not exist all by itself**. It is a part of the continuous extended family pattern and remains an important unit in the wider kinship relations. These families are largely in the middle stage of development cycle and are better referred to as extended families. Families which migrate to the cities do not sever their ties and bonds with their joint family in the villages, rather

actively maintain them (K.M. Kapadia, 1966). Often many rural families have an interest in sending a member, usually a qualified professional with a job, to urban centre to get remittances for reinvestment in village property and to enhance the family's status (Stern, 1993). The urban nuclear family also keeps receiving his share from the joint produce from the village.

Among educated urban middle class young men and women, there are positive feelings towards parents, close relatives and distant relatives, which reflect a persisting feeling of 'psychological oneness'. Though the younger generation likes autonomy and independence and dislikes interference by parents in their family matters, yet many continue to stay with their parents. The nuclear family in urban setting welcomes their parents/parents-in law, when the children are small and they need someone at home to attend to children while they are away on their daily job/work. Even if, out of love or duty, the parents live with their nuclear family progeny, and are looked after by them, they are treated as 'respected guests' and not as Heads/Elders of Joint Family. This does not make it a joint family. The old parents are only guests staying with them to look after grandchildren, when needed. Thus, we see that the collectivist orientation is much stronger than an individual's need for autonomy. Individuals prefer to stay nuclear, and at the same time, want to benefit from an extended family. It may now be said that the defining features of a joint family are no more co-residence or common property, but collective sentiments and emotional bonding.

Disputing the idea of nuclearisation, A.M. Shah (1987) says that the statement of 'joint family is disintegrating' is applicable to the upper castes, middle and professional classes in urban areas and metropolitan cities who prefer western type nuclear family. On the large scale, however, joint family has still not disappeared.

As we have already discussed, nuclear families may only be joint families-in-making. When the grandfather dies, his sons divide the property and set up their independent households. However, when their own sons grow up and marry, they again become joint families. Mandelbaum writes that even a man who has broken away from his parental joint family to start an independent household will typically expect to maintain a joint family when his sons marry. This process of nuclearisation and jointness can be considered as ongoing process in India's family system.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

5. Analyse the factors responsible for change in the Indian family system.

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6. Is the joint family system in India disintegrating?

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10.6 CHILDHOOD IN THE CHANGING CONTEXT

Of all the impacts of transformation of family, the most profound are on the children and the aged. We know that old people, who enjoy authority, respect, care and company in a joint family system, lose all these as families become nuclear. But what exactly is the impact on children? Let us examine this in detail.

10.6.1 Child Rearing Practices

Primarily, there have been considerable changes in child rearing practices. The basic principle of 'lalan-palan' was predominant in the traditional family. In the early years, the mother and other family members took special care of the child for a long time, even after the child could function independently. He/she could learn eating, walking and dressing naturally as time passes. However, nuclearisation has made this process a faster one. The child is under parental pressure to become skillful at these tasks much earlier. In fact in a joint family the child learns faster and more easily from large number of relations living around him.

In a joint family, children's vocabulary, language and social skills develop earlier and better as they listen to many voices, have to maintain loving relationships with many, grow with siblings and cousins of same age etc.

The growing nuclearisation of family in urban areas had deprived the child of the love and affection of numerous family members. The emotional world of the child has shrunk along with her social world. Parents have reduced their roles in the intellectual and social development of children, assigning these roles to creches and schools.

10.6.2 Segregation of Child's World from Adults

The traditional family did not ever intentionally separate the child from the adults. The child, a part of the environment where the adults interacted, learnt a great deal about elders and their roles through observation. Well-known American psychologist Lois B. Murphy, who has studied the socialisation processes in India, mentions what an Indian respondent said to her regarding the different patterns of child socialisation in America and India. The respondent said to her, 'You *bring up* your children, while we *live with* them.' This living with the children and sharing the same space was true in case of traditional families (Sinha/1994).

10.6.3 Absence of Wider Emotional Connection

In the absence of grand parents and near kinsfolk, the child grows as self-centric, not recognising any wider kin network or social connection other than his/her parents. The child might also feel that one need not take care of one's parents when they grow old. Not only child is deprived of ample love and affection, the child's development as a social being remains incomplete.

10.6.4 Pressure of Parental Expectation

Parental expectation from children in terms of performance at school and future career has intensified. Thus, in place of childhood being 'protective, permissive and indulgent', the child continuously feels the pressure of parents. This 'cardinal crisis

of childhood' is a source of stress and anxiety that leads to behavioural problems (Sinha, 1994).

10.6.5 Socialisation by Other Agencies

In urban areas, child-rearing practices are becoming 'western' in nature. The child is confined to the creche, playroom or nursery. Alienated from direct parental care, the child is glued to the television that further prevents the child from being a part of the parents' world. Rather than taking the responsibility of facilitating the intellectual social and moral development of the child, parents assign these tasks to educational institutions. Thus, the overall influence of the parents on the child has declined. This has allowed peer groups and other agencies like the school mass media and market to become important in filling important socialisation functions like cultural transmission to children and adolescents.

10.6.6 Early Individuation of Child

In traditional families, parents and children shared a symbiotic relationship and psychological separation of parents from child especially of the mother did not occur (Sinha 1994). This in a way also proved to be an obstacle in the individuation process of child whereby a child grows as an independent and functional unit. This has changed due to nuclearisation of families. Psychologists and family therapists have observed that the cardinal conflict of adolescence, i.e., the struggle for autonomy, develops at a much younger age in India than in the West. Although the child learns to be autonomous at an early age, he/she also becomes susceptible to behavioural problems.

10.6.7 Discrimination Against Girl Child

An ugly trend, we are witnessing these days, is growing discrimination against girl child in both joint and nuclear families. This is a trend, connected with 'dowry' system, the daughter going away to another family, not adding to family income etc. Families prefer to keep their size small and invariably prefer a male child to a female. With rising access to technology and sex-selective abortions, the female child is not even allowed to born.

Check Your Progress

Notes :a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

7. How does the change in Indian family structure affect child rearing?

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10.7 FUTURE OF INDIAN FAMILY

We have seen that although there are changes in the forms and structures of traditional family in India, the very essence of family survives and even thrives. There has been an increasing premium on joint life in terms of ties and obligations, sentimental

attachment with family members even though joint residence may not exist in many cases. This shows that irrespective of the changes, Indian people continue to believe in family as the fundamental institution and the basic unit of society. While family system is being weakened in the West, with other institution taking up the traditional roles of the family, India has retained family at its core of social organisation. This is so because marriage is a universal norm in Indian society. Marrying and settling down in a family are considered a normal phenomenon in one's life. Therefore, family retains its valued position in India, rooted in its tradition and way of life. Maintaining good relations with siblings, parents, cousins, etc., members of extended family are considered a virtue in Indian culture. This is true for both the 'arranged marriage' and 'love-marriage', the typical unique classification of marriages in India and other oriental societies.

Family as an institution becomes all the more significant in modern times. Although its traditional socialisation roles are said to be withering, family still has the important function of primary socialisation of the child. It has also to socialise the child for future life, occupation, status attainment etc. The alienating work atmosphere and lack of bonding with primary community makes the family an important source of emotional support for the individual. Though the incidence of divorce and separation are challenging the idea of family, yet they cannot undermine the place of family in society.

10.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we discussed the institution of family in general and the family system in India in particular. The Indian family organisation is characterised by the 'joint family', rooted in the tradition of joint living. With social change, this family system is changing in favour of the nuclear family. This change is multidimensional though. We saw how childhood is particularly affected in this process. However, many opine that the joint family is only undergoing a transition. The basic familial bonds, emotional and sentimental ties with erstwhile joint family members are deeply valued even by urban nuclear families. There is thus, a simultaneous reinforcement of joint family values. Still rooted in tradition and values, Indian society will continue to rely on and preserve the family as its most important institution.

10.9 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Discusses the features of traditional joint family system in India.
2. Traditional family system in India is in a process of change, Comment.
3. What are the main factors that have led to changes in the traditional Indian family system?

10.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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10.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Family is a social group consisting of two individuals of opposite gender who have a socially approved sexual relationship and their biological or adopted children, along with other adults who may be related to the couple by blood. Family, the smallest social group, is the basic unit of society. It influences the individual in the formative years. Emotional bonds and sentiments unite family members.
2. Nuclear family is the smallest unit of family comprising of a man, his wife and unmarried children. Joint family characterises joint living of old parents with married sons, daughters in law, unmarried sons and daughters and grandchildren. Extended family includes members related by blood/marriage not necessarily living together.
3. Family is the Primary agency of socialisation of children. It provides security, care and affection to children and the old. It maintains society by regulating sexual behaviour of adults and producing children.
4. Joint family as a unit of production and consumption, has increased efficiencies of pooled labour, and the economies of a single kitchen and household. The children and the aged and even the unemployed, non-earning adults get adequate attention and care. There are joint efforts to sail through any crisis. However, due to its mainly patriarchal nature, women have low status and conjugal bond is subservient to the consanguine. It hampers individual freedom. This may happen in nuclear families also.
5. Industrialisation, urbanisation, migration, education and empowerment of women, unemployment in rural areas, fragmentation of land holdings, and growing individualism are the factors for change in the joint family system.
6. The joint family system is in a transitional phase. Nuclearisation is not yet a

Family Life Education

dominant phenomenon, with nuclear families showing features related to traditional families. The nuclear family is linked up to its extended family in numerous ways and does not exist as an independent entity.

7. The growing nuclearisation of family in urban areas has deprived the child of the love and affection of numerous family members. The emotional world of the child has shrunk along with his her social world. Parents have reduced their roles in the intellectual and social development of children, assigning these roles to creches and schools.

UNIT 11 FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION —

CONCEPT AND

IMPORTANCE

Structure

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Objectives
- 11.3 Definition and Contents of Family Life Education
 - 11.3.1 Definition of Family Life Education
 - 11.3.2 Contents of Family Life Education
- 11.4 Objectives and Importance of Family Life Education
 - 11.4.1 Specific Objectives of Family Life Education
 - 11.4.2 Importance of Family Life Education
- 11.5 Traditional Indian Values Related to Family Life Education
 - 11.5.1 Purusarthas
 - 11.5.2 Hindu Ashramas
- 11.6 Role of Individual, Family and Community in Family Life Education
- 11.7 Advantages of Family Life Education
- 11.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.9 Unit-end Exercises
- 11.10 Suggested Readings
- 11.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.1 INTRODUCTION

India has a long tradition of close bonded family system. But today some people argue that (modern) family as an institution is in crisis. Let us take a more optimistic view. Families are not exempt from the difficulties that accompany rapid social and technological changes. Yet the family has always demonstrated an ability to turn difficulties into challenges. Indeed the family can continue offer support and security to individuals in the society in a fast changing world.

Each family has a unique sense of shared family traditions, shared experiences and continuity of patterns. We believe that nurturing this quality of family contact and interaction becomes even more important at a time like today when many people feel alienated, rootless and isolated. Technological progress often contributes to development, but sometimes it generates a sense of depersonalisation — a question of self-identity. That is why in the present day context, family life education is essential and relevant.

Every society has its own way of preparing its younger members for adulthood by its cultural and social transmitted norms through its way of life and primarily through an educational process. Traditionally, most elements of family life education have

been informal, taking place within the home, place of worship, work and everyday contacts with other people. In childhood, many values related to family life education have been imparted through stories from folk tales, religious scriptures, etc. The hidden rationale behind these is to enable children to imbibe values in them so that they act as guidelines for the rest of their lives.

In almost all religions, societies, communities and tribes, initiation rites and ceremonies are performed which symbolise the end of childhood and entry into adulthood. After this ceremony, the child can have access to the knowledge and privileges that are permitted only to adults. Like this in Southern India and many other parts of India, when a girl reaches the age of puberty, a ceremony is observed and the girl is taught about the intricacies related to family life education. So, through the process of socialisation, by observing people's behaviour and through their own experience, children and adolescents become familiar with the norms, customs and values of their own society. These experiences provide the guidelines for their own behaviour.

In the present context, families in many parts of the world are finding the task of helping young people to prepare for adult life, becoming increasingly difficult. Often it is found that they have as little awareness as their children about the problems they are facing. Here comes the role of school and voluntary organisations working in this area. Schools and voluntary organisations, which in some respects replace traditional form of education and guidance, can also assist people to adjust to changes. The development of organised programmes of family life education is one way of practising their willingness to work together with families, to assist young people in their transition from childhood to adulthood.

Very often it is observed that family life education is treated as synonymous with sex education. In reality however, family life education is a much broader concept than sex education. Sex education is considered as only one of the components of family life education. Family life education covers economic functions, social functions like marriage, responsible parenthood etc., apart from other sexual health aspects, as discussed in detail under this section.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the unit is to acquaint the teacher with the concept of Family Life Education. This unit will also aim at highlighting the importance of Family Life Education from the point of view of an individual, family and community. This unit will facilitate you as teachers to be able to:

- describe the concept of Family Life Education;
- explain the meaning and objectives of Family Life Education;
- appreciate the significance of Traditional Indian Values related to Family Life Education;
- describe the role of individual, family and community in Family Life Education;
- point out the need for strengthening these institutions.

11.3 DEFINITION AND CONTENTS OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

11.3.1 Definition of Family Life Education

Various international organisations and eminent people working in the area of family life education have tried to define it in various ways. Some of the definitions are given below:

"Family life education refers to those educational concepts and experiences that influence attitudes towards family living, personal relationships and sexual development" (*Department of Education, Virginia, USA, 1978*).

"One comprehensive and attractive approach perceives family life education as catering for individual needs leading to personal growth and enables the individual to function as a responsible member of the family and society" (*A curriculum of Family Life Education for Youth Organisation prepared by Malaysia foundation of Family Planning Association 1985*).

Family life education includes a study of self-awareness, understanding of others, of sexuality, marriage and parenthood. The knowledge gained and skills developed will contribute to the individual's ability to cope both with social change and with relationships in society as a citizen, spouse and parent. (*Formal definitions adopted at the International Planned Parenthood Federation Seminar on Teachers and National Development with Special Reference to Family Life Education Lesotho, 1978*).

Family life Education may be defined as education for human development, which seeks to ensure that each individual approaching adulthood is equipped with the skills and personal reserves to cope with the challenges of everyday life in society within acceptable societal structures, and adapt to change with experience and equilibrium.

But, none of these definitions seem to cover the entire aspect of family life education. The definition given by International Planned Parenthood Federation is closer to what we generally consider as Family Life Education. All these definitions, however, ignored the economic factors involved in family life education.

Therefore, in this unit we would like to describe family life education in the following way:

The concept of Family Life Education refers to a variety of formal and informal efforts by which persons become ready for the roles and responsibilities of family life.

Rapid technological and social changes in today's world have increased the need for individuals, families and societies to enhance interpersonal and decision-making skills of each member of the family, and reinterpret the meaning of mutual commitment, as well as maintain support for their economic self-sufficiency and emotional stability.

Rising divorce rates, marital breakdowns, family violence and falling indices of marital satisfaction and the time family members spend together suggest that people are inadequately prepared for the challenges of marriage and family. Yet the number of stable, satisfying, and growing marriages, especially within the nuclear families suggest that many are seeking to build strong families.

Family life education is a broad comprehensive and flexible field. Anything which contributes to the knowledge and capacities, total growth and well-being of the family - physical, mental, emotional, economic and spiritual can be included under the umbrella of family life education. That is why family life education has its roots in many disciplines including sociology, social work, psychology, anthropology, biology, education, history etc. The goals of the programme are often broad based. Its objectives are to promote the freedom to choose parenthood and the enrichment of human life along with members of the family.

Family life education is considered a value related concept. Most of the values related to family life education are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural milieu of the people. These values are moral, ethical, cultural, religious, personal etc.

11.3.2 Contents of Family Life Education

The contents of family life education are vital for young people while preparing themselves for adult life. What type of educational input should be provided to them which will help them in taking decisions and developing their skills as responsible members of a family.

Let us analyse the various sub-components of family life education

Family: meaning, types and functions

Family is the basic unit of the society. Although social scientists have studied a great deal about various facets of family structure and organisation, they do encounter difficulties in developing a broad, culture free generalisation that would be applicable to families in a wide range of societies. One major difficulty arises from problems of definitions associated with the concept of family itself. The important question of what constitutes a family is not easy to answer, because by itself the term family is ambiguous. To describe more precisely the concept of family, the types of families have to be examined.

Basically, these are three types of families: the nuclear family, the joint family and the extended family. In Joint Family, parents, grandparents and even great grandparents and then progeny live in the same household. The family members are economically and socio-culturally close knit. The extended family includes blood/marriage relationships, not living together in the same household or city. By and large, members of the traditional extended family are more sedentary. Nuclear families on the other hand consist of a single family of husband, wife and children. This type of family is mostly found in urban and industrial societies. In some countries, young couples in a nuclear family setting are at a loss in the absence of parents and elder relatives to whom they can turn in case of, what behaviour scientists refer to, as family discontinuities, family crises and other difficulties.

In terms of functions, the strength and solidarity of society are highly dependent on how the family as a basic unit performs its basic functions. It is the responsibility of all members of a family to fulfil family functions although parents generally shoulder a larger share of these functions. Failure on the part of the parents to perform their duties can lead to social problems for many generations to come. Parenthood needs skills of child rearing and preparing good progeny. To have truly happy family the

needs of each and every member must be met. These include the provision for basic needs of a person, which according to the psychologist Abraham Maslow are: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, self-esteem and self-actualisation. However, with needs go responsibilities and duties. All members of the family including the children also grow with the belief that they also have certain duties and functions to perform. They should learn to control their demands and expectations.

Family roles, relationships and responsibilities

In India, traditional family relationships are generally quite extensive. In addition, there are other types of family relationships, such as those arising from a network of marriages between families. Besides, family ties can become quite complicated, as they get based not on blood kinship but also on past associations such as schoolmates, co-workers and so on. They become emotionally very close, as good affectionate friends with close bonds and emotional relationship felt as family member. In short, family and family-life relationships are governed by various customs and traditions which are more binding than rules or laws.

A clear understanding of roles in a family is very important. Misinterpretation or lack of understanding leads to problems and sometimes chaos. For any family to exist happily there are certain tasks, which must be performed by family members. The issue of roles within the family is further complicated by changes in the family system, i.e., change from extended to nuclear/conjugal families. The participation of women in economic activities outside homes, the influence of western culture, access to higher education etc, are affecting these changes. For smooth family atmosphere, household needs, responsibilities, chores, routine actions should be shared by all members. There may, however, be informal assignments, often by mutual consent and items of needed work concerning the family.

Family life cycle

The study of family life cycle provides a basis for the study of the composition, growth and development of families. An understanding of the stress and strains experienced at each stage of the cycle paves the way for better understanding and cooperation among family members. There are basically eight stages in the family life cycle. These are:

Stage 1. Bearing families

At this stage, a couple learn to synchronize their ideas, values and so on. The married partners are learning to live with each other for the first time. Differences are bound to appear from time to time and it is important that a couple iron them out and establish a meaningful relationship in marriage.

State 2. Childbearing families

The couple enters this stage at the time of first conception. With the coming of a child, finance, leisure time, and privacy will undergo changes. Proper child care becomes very important at this stage. Attention is diverted or shared between the newcomer and the spouse.

State 3. Families with pre-school children

At this stage, parents need to cater for the critical needs and interests of pre-school

children to stimulate their growth and development. Husband and wife share the household work, and some may find this to be difficult. Misunderstanding between the couple may also result if too much or too little attention is given to the children. They may differ in their views and actions about how a child should be brought up or disciplined, rewarded or punished etc.

State 4. Families with school children

Families with school going children have to pay attention to the child's educational and growth needs. The parents are also expected to collaborate with the demands and expectations of the school in the helping the child in his/her studies and developmental aspects.

Stage 5. Families with adolescents

Adolescents have special issues that need the help of parents and this stage can be very crucial for them and their children. As the teenagers approach adulthood, parents must ensure a balance between freedom and responsibility by helping their children to plan and execute them which will be beneficial and productive in various life situations.

Stage 6. Families as launching centres

After the young adults have gone into work or studies parents begin to feel a certain sense of loneliness. It is often referred to as 'The empty nest syndrome'. At the same time they also have the need to maintain a supportive home base to the children. Children need support and guidance for various cultural, religious and traditional family based events like marriage, birthday celebrations and other ceremonies in the company of parents and relatives.

Stage 7. Families in the middle years

This is a trying time for a couple who have to adjust to a life together again. It is important that hobbies are developed to occupy their time after retirement. The reduction in the income makes it important to adopt a more modest standard of living.

Stage 8. Families in the late years

However, their expenses on certain items, like children's education, reduce their money needs. The grown-up children, by now, have their own families, children and income. Yet it is appropriate that the parents expect support, emotional, physical and economic, if need be from the grown-up children, living their own family lives. Good family life education, should result in their readiness to make their contribution to their old parents lives.

The family members need to learn to cope with bereavement and living alone at this stage. Society's expectations will keep children away from the concerns of aged parents. Very often helpers like home nurses may have to provide the required services to the parents.

Family resources

Family needs are related to the basic human needs as described by Abraham Maslow

in his Hierarchy of Needs. According to this theory, all human beings have five basic needs. The are:

Physiological needs — food, drink, sex, clean air and good health

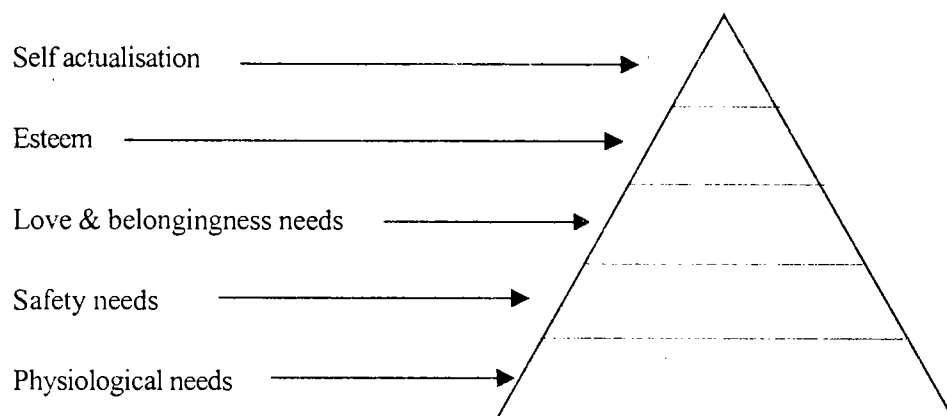
Safety needs — to have a roof over ones head, housing, clothing etc.

Love and belongingness needs — to have a family or community to belong to, to have a shoulder to lean, on the need for acceptance, giving and receiving love.

Esteem — Self respect and respect for others

Self-actualisation — Self-fulfillment and reaching one's potential, to become somebody in life

This need hierarchy theory can be graphically represented in the form of a pyramid. The needs at the lower level should be, to an extent met before a higher level of needs emerge to press for satisfaction.



Maslow's Need Hierarchy

All religions, philosophers and cultures advise that for a good life, one should control/ limit one's needs, living with austerity and not with greed or envy to keep up with false prestige. Families which do so remain happy and blessed.

Family needs are unlimited and the resources are limited. The family or the individual will use human and non-human resources to meet the unlimited needs. The family has to manage the use of their resources in order to maximise their satisfaction derived from them. Family resources are discussed in the context of various stages of family life cycle and family size. It should be borne in mind that every event in the different stages of family life drains the family resources. The demands on the family resources are heavy especially when the different stages overlap. Family size effects the need, satisfaction of the family members. Every child has the right to have a balanced diet, adequate clothing, safe shelter, proper education, attention, affection and medical attention as well as the right to meet all basic physical, mental, psychological and spiritual requirements of a healthy and happy life.

Marriage

Marriage in India is considered a permanent relationship, therefore, appropriate educational programmes are needed to prepare young people for marriage. While discussing marriage, the following questions are usually raised: For what reasons do

people usually marry? What are the most common types of marriages? How do people meet their marriage partner? How long does a couple usually know each other before marriage? What is the most common age for marriage for a man and for a woman?

In India, marriages are usually classified as follows: Marriage by free choice of the partners or love marriage; arranged marriage and forced/arranged marriage. These are unique classifications in Indian and some other oriental societies. They can further be classified as monogamous or polygamous which are very rare phenomena; civil, religious and customary.

Responsible parenthood

Early marriage and parenthood have been the established pattern in many societies and remain so despite the efforts of a number of government to raise the legal minimum age of marriage. In India, the minimum age at marriage is 21 and 18 for boys and girls respectively. Social, economic and cultural changes are affecting many aspects of family life including parenthood. As a result, young people today may have to consider issues that were previously not necessary to be taken into account. Some key issues will have to be considered by them before getting married. Becoming parents brings responsibilities which go on expanding over the years, because having children is considered to be a natural pattern of family life, some couples do not weigh seriously the implications of parenthood.

Following are some of the implications of responsible parenthood:

1. To avoid risks of hunger and financial insecurity, parents should plan the number of children, based on their ability to support and rear them to full maturity or till they are self-supporting.
2. To reassure themselves of the benefits of parenthood in their old age. Parents should provide their children with guidance and direction so that they develop and inculcate the right values as they approach adulthood.
3. To help in achieving an orderly society, parents should strive to bring up a family whose members are cognizant of both their rights and duties, while recognizing the benefits of the society as well as the tasks of supporting it.
4. Parents who respond properly to their partners personal needs, are in effect reducing (if not, eliminating) the probability of their ever becoming estranged.
5. The children should not feel dominated or dictated. They should be trusted and given freedom of thought and behaviour. The individuality of each member of the family be respected. The children be treated with dignity and shown due regard. They should never feel humiliated, insulted or given physical, painful punishment or also unnecessary temptations or rewards for obedience or good behavior or habits. Good behaviours is a reward by itself.

Responsible parenthood cannot be discussed without bringing up the issue of family planning. Family planning is a means of enhancing the quality of life of families including regulating and spacing childbirth, helping fertile couples to beget children and providing counselling for both parents and would be parents.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

1. Describe the meaning of family life education.

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2. What are the various implications of responsible parenthood?

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11.4 OBJECTIVES AND IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Family life education is concerned with assisting prospective candidates for learning the process of living in the family, containing the family life to the next generation and sustaining healthy, social, cultural, religious and traditional practices and values.

The major objectives of family life education are:

1. To develop knowledge regarding the concept of family, its roles and functions. Every individual both young and old should have proper knowledge and understanding of the concept of family, its roles and function. The knowledge will help an individual to recognise the various tasks that need to be undertaken for the well-being and maintenance of the family.
2. Family life education aims at developing the ability to deal with family relationship and responsibility. Family life education helps in establishing and maintaining satisfying relationships with members of the family, with friends and with others whom they come into contact with in the context of family life.
3. Family life education aims at developing life skills to cope with different situations. Family life education develops the knowledge, values and skills, necessary for adult life, marriage, parenthood, participation in the social life of the community. It also helps in communicating effectively with others and in making wise decisions about all matters related to family life, personal relationships and various memberships of the community.
4. Family life education aims at helping in understanding and coping with changes in one's own life and changes in the society. It helps an individual to understand and cope with changes in the adolescent life and with the society in which they live; for example, the breaking down of traditional social structures, the changing roles of men and women, marriage practices etc.
5. Family life education aims at developing knowledge about physiological processes

of one's own body. It also creates an awareness regarding proper age of marriage, sex and proper time for reproduction, the consequences to adolescent pregnancies and parenting and of alternatives to pregnancies and contraception.

6. Family life education seeks to create responsible and useful young citizens.
7. It develops realisation of the role of family in promotion of civil society and duties towards the community, nation and humanity.

11.4.1 Specific Objectives of Family Life Education

The specific objectives of family life education are illustrated below:

Components	Objectives
1. Concept of family, types and purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) To identify the historical functions of a family and its structureb) To define the term familyc) To identify various types of familiesd) To enumerate the functions of the family
2. Family relationship and responsibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) To explore the concept of relationshipb) To identify rights and responsibilities in the familyc) To understand the factors that affect family relationshipsd) To cite common conflicts that arose in a familye) To identify the causes arising from individual differencesf) To recognise the various tasks that need to be undertaken for the well-being and maintenance of family
3. Family life cycle	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) To understand the various stages of family life cycle
4. Family needs and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) To identify events in the life of a large family and to determine the stages that place heavy demands on the family resourcesb) To understand the basic family needs and to identify the resources available to achieve themc) To understand the impact of family size on the basic needs of family members

- d) To develop skills for budgeting and managing family economy
- 5. Marriage
 - a) To understand the marriage customs, laws, norms and practices under various cultures
 - b) To understand the concept and the responsibilities of marriage.
- 6. Responsible parenthood
 - a) To understand the roles and responsibilities of parenting
 - b) To appreciate the responsibilities involved in having children
 - c) To be able to explore and acknowledge the youth's attitudes and values concerning parenting
 - d) To discuss the concept and importance of family planning and the advantages of practicing family planning
 - e) To identify the different methods of birth control, their effectiveness, use, side effects and safety

Source: *Family Life Education: Package One*, UNESCO, PROAP, Bangkok, 1988.

11.4.2 Importance of Family Life Education

The following reasons can be offered to indicate the importance of family life education in today's world:

1. Expectations of marriages and family life are changing: When marriage was for economic security and husbands held a more powerful position in a patriarchal society, the rules were simple and straight-forward. Expectations for affection were minimal as were options outside marriage. Today with love, companionship and equality so important, communication and problem solving skills have become even more valuable for happiness.
2. Terms of marriage and family are changing: At the turn of century, the life-span was shorter; more of marriage revolved around parenting and couples often drew on family and friend networks for support. Today with nuclear families being on the increase in our country, couples are expected to depend on themselves and meet their own needs, with minimal extended family support, and coordinate adult roles and growth through 50-60 years.
3. Routine life by itself, does not prepare most persons for new family roles: Couples face more demands and fewer supports, but few persons learn to be mature and equal partners in families. Conflict resolution and problem solving skills are part of many job-training and volunteer groups, yet couple communication remains sorely neglected. Traditional education prepares a person for 8 hours of his/her

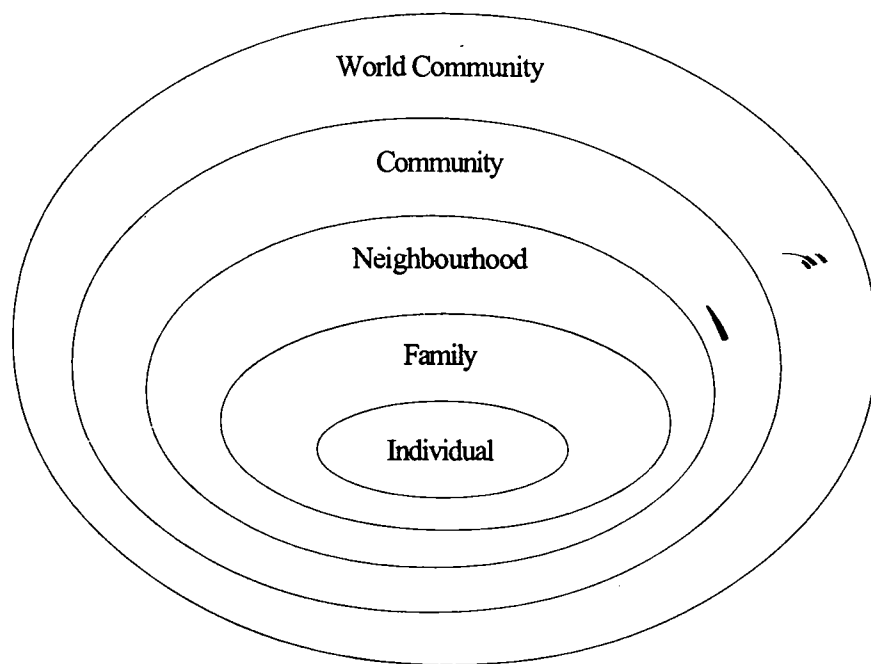
working life. A day has 24 hours throughout which a person is functioning as a member of a family in a particular role. What preparation does one receive for this formidable and important role?

4. Benefits of happy family life and adjustment: Research finds happy families have lower rates of illness, depression and conflict in and outside their marriage. Well adjusted partners make easier transitions to parenting and tend to be more supportive parents and form good relations with neighbours, friends and others. For most persons, marital satisfaction is the best index of family satisfaction and family satisfaction is the best predictor of well-being.
5. Consequences of marital breakdowns: Whether divorced or living under the same roof and being completely separated from each other emotionally, partners, their children, their relatives experience emotional and financial stress which may have long term effects. In particular, poverty, continued partner conflict and isolation from old friends and family can limit the horizons of couples in stress and their children. Most person would choose to avoid families where there is no harmony or peace.
6. Benefits of family life education: Researchers have successfully shown the beneficial outcome of training programmes in terms of increased skills and satisfaction for long-time, lowered marital conflict rates, and reduced family violence.
7. Starting early prevents breakdowns: Couples who are aware of principles of the family dynamics, problem solving methods and support and skill resources become more aware and more capable of handling the challenges of family life. Proactive couples tend to avoid relationship-threatening crises and enjoy the benefits of life together.
8. The pandemic of HIV and AIDS: One of the salutary side effects of the otherwise disastrous pandemic of HIV and AIDS is that it helps us to turn our attention once again to the values of mutual love, marital fidelity etc, which are the bedrock of the institution of family. Though AIDS spreads not only through sexual relations, it must be admitted that in a majority of cases, sexual contact is the main source of infection. Marital fidelity has, thus, the added advantage of also preventing a lot of infection. It is to be noted that it is not the HIV and AIDS pandemic that makes marital fidelity a value. It has been a value which is the basis of the institution called family, and now in the context of HIV and AIDS we get the motivation to reflect on this all important value once again.

Society is the name of a group of people who live together. A society is composed of many different types of organisations and institutions and family is one of them. In fact, the family is the primary unit, which constitutes society. Family, community and society are regarded as special dynamic institutions which interact among themselves. It is the society which decides the quality and types of family. It depends on the health of the family to create a vibrant and progressive nation and society. Again, family consists of individuals. So, it is necessary to develop health and proper understanding among each individual to make a family vibrant and progressive. So, the individual is the basic entity in a family. A healthy society or community is but one large cohesive family. Family is the microcosm of society or community possessing all the culture and civilisation it has acquired.

This can be best defined by concentric diagram given below:

**Family Life Education -
 Concept and Importance**



This model shows that the individual is the cornerstone of the world community. This is because she is the essential constituent of family, neighbourhood, community, society, nation and world community. So, any change in the individual's attitudes and behaviour affects all these above institutions. Simultaneously, any change in the large institutions lie neighbourhoods, community, nation and world community will affect the individual too. So it is pertinent that roles of all these institutions are crucial as far as family life education is concerned. Each institution has to play specific roles to keep harmony among themselves and in the world community.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

3. What are the major objectives of family life education?

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4. State the importance of family life education in the context of HIV and AIDS.

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11.5 TRADITIONAL INDIAN VALUES RELATED TO FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

In India, like some other Asian and Pacific countries, socio-cultural values like preferences for sons, early marriage, and low status of women in the society are quite evident. Continuation of family lineage, social security that comes from family cohesion, performance of religious rights for salvation of parents' soul after death in accordance with certain religious traditions (especially the Hindu religion), availability of free labour to parents and economic benefits to parents in the form of increased income are all important motivations related to family in our country. In rural areas children help the parents in planting and harvesting of agricultural products, cooking, cleaning, fetching water and looking after younger ones in the family. The phenomenon of child labour (though illegal) prevalent in the unorganised sector supplements the income of poverty stricken households. Still, in rural areas the girls are encouraged to get married and have children at an early age due to social customs, in spite of legal provisions concerning the minimum marriage age. Though child rearing at an early age is socially acceptable, the practice may restrict the educational, social and economic opportunities of the younger generation. In the process, in rural areas, as well as in slum communities early marriages and unplanned birth of children are found to be responsible for all ill-health of both the mother and the child. In our country, child mortality due to various diseases is very high. The traditional joint families with their numerous advantages are on the decline. In both urban and rural societies, the birth of a child is considered a blessing of God. Some of these values are deeply rooted in our culture and it is difficult to change them immediately.

Marriage is deeply rooted in socio-cultural ethics. The traditional value of an Indian family is that a girl should be married to a boy belonging to a family having identical social status and vice-versa, irrespective of his income and level of education and the question of compatibility. The main consideration, often, is the reputation of a family with respect to social, economic and cultural status. Usually, the boys are a couple of years older than the girls, especially in the case of arranged marriage. In urban areas, the prime concern in the marriage of a girl now-a-days is the income of the boy and the economic status of his parents. Traditionally, it was taken for granted that marriages should be arranged with the consent and advice of the parents. In many middle class and upper middle class orthodox families, horoscope matching before marriage is conducted on religious guidelines. In traditional Indian society, dowry system was not practised but the system of dowry is being increasingly practiced in the context of changing value systems of upper middle class and high society. Though dowry has been legally abolished, it still exists with added vigour, making the lives of girls and parents miserable. At times attempts are made to justify dowry as the right of the girl to the parents' inheritance. In fact, dowry is often given from what the parents do not have i.e. borrowed money.

In traditional Indian society, inter-caste marriages were discouraged. Child rearing was considered as the principal responsibility of the wife. Family decisions were the prerogative of the father of the household. Traditional Indian society could be considered a very reserved society as far as dissemination of information regarding sex role/sex relationships and sex irresponsibilities are concerned. Sex was almost a taboo subject. Male children have been given a preferential treatment. The wife was blamed if a male child was not born. Home was considered an ideal place for

women, and women were discouraged from working outside home. But, in the urban society, the scene is changing fast. It was believed that if women were to take up a job outside the family, the family would be neglected. Women from poor family are engaged to do all sorts of work for others. Education for girl children is discouraged.

The society was divided into various castes and religious rituals were strictly followed. For the development of the children, parents enforced strict discipline. Although the influence of some of these values has changed in urban areas, they still play a major role in decision making in most families in rural areas. Re-orientation of values on various issues related to dynamics of family life is a long and difficult process, but experiences in a number of countries show that it can be achieved. In all societies, traditional values are increasingly being challenged, resulting in conflict between adolescent children and parents.

In ancient India, all men and women were advised to practice *Purusarthas* and *Ashramas* which were directly related to family life.

11.5.1 Purusarthas

Purusarthas represent the fundamental aspirations of ancient sages and social thinkers. These are values of ideals for which one must strive in conduct and behaviour. Hindu social organisation is both material and spiritual, and this helps people coordinate between the two. There are four *purusarthas*: *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*.

Dharma

The term *dharma* comes from Sanskrit, which literally means to hold 'to preserve'. It represents right action. It stands as a principle for maintaining the stability of society. It is the guiding principle for attainment of other *purusarthas*.

Artha

Artha refers to acquisition of material prosperity. It is important to acquire material wealth because it satisfies the material needs for the running of a household, to give gifts and to feed the poor. They should be earned through *dharma* or right action.

Kama

Kama refers to all the desires in man for enjoying and satisfaction of all the senses including the sex desire through right action. It is necessary to satisfy the physical urges of man as well as to achieve propagation of species.

Moksha

It is the supreme and final purpose of life and is attained through proper functioning of other *Purusarthas*. *Moksha* is mainly concerned with the individual and frees him from all suffering and the cycle of birth.

11.5.2 Hindu Ashramas

The above mentioned four *Purusarthas* are the basis of Hindu *Ashramas*. They are concerned with the link between the individual and the community. They form the psycho-moral basis of the Indian social system.

The ashramas are the four different stages of life in which specific functions have to be performed. The four *ashramas* are *Brahmacharya*, *Grahashtya*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sanyasa*.

Brahmacharya

This is normally accepted as the first twenty five years of life. In this phase, each young man maintains celibacy and stays at the house of the Guru for studies and learning. Usually, in this period, an individual is engaged in Dharma.

Grahashtya

Roughly, the next twenty-five years of life form the period of Grahashtya in which an individual gets married and leads his family life. He/she engages in Dharma with Artha and Kama.

Vanaprastha

The third quarter of life in which an individual starts dissociating himself from the family life and starts the life of a pilgrim or religious wanderer and gradually gets away from Arth and Kama functions and prepares for Moksha.

Sanyasa

This is the last quarter of life in which an individual dissociates himself completely from the family and becomes a monk engaged in Dharma and Moksha.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

5. Give a brief account of the ancient system of Hindu Ashramas and the Purusarthas.

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11.6 ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Let us now turn our attention to the understanding of the importance of individual, family and community in family life education.

Individual

Family life education focuses on how individuals as constituent parts of family life may become physically healthy, emotionally mature, disciplined, responsible and tolerant human beings. Its goal is to help individuals develop interpersonal skills and enriching human relationships by learning how to relate effectively within their families. As a

whole, it seeks to improve the quality of their life throughout the entire range of human developments.

Family Life Education - Concept and Importance

Human beings perform different roles like husband-wife, parent-child relationship etc., and functions like child care and development, family resource management, family planning. That is why one and the same individual is supported to know about all these aspects, their prospects and consequences. All these needs can be categorised under different categories. An individual may have various types of felt needs and development needs. For example, an individual may feel, "I need to be more assertive in my relationships." The second type of needs are 'Developmental needs'. These are needs that are common to most individuals during the course of their development (e.g., dealing with one's changing sexuality at puberty, or with proper action for retirement). These needs are generally identified by the empirical studies and by the collective wisdom and experience of humankind.

In many cases, there is an overlap between these two kinds of needs. The educational needs of new parents, for example, may be both a felt need expressed by the parents themselves and a development need emerging from their new roles and responsibilities.

Another category of needs that deserves special attention is 'Societal needs'. These are needs that emerge from both current and anticipated social, economic and political conditions that impinge in important ways on the lives of all individuals. For instance, the pace of social change in most societies dictates a need to redefine the roles of adult family members. Where traditions once established the norms for family behaviour, parents are now being challenged to examine their role and to accommodate the demands of changing family structures and functions. The state also has shown an increasing tendency to intervene in family life for reasons of economic, social justice and human rights. National programmes of planned parenthood for example, have been established in a number of countries to curtail population growth and to promote improved standards of living. The belief too, that parenting, skills, knowledge and attitude can be learned through programmes of education as opposed to learning from one generation to another has given rise to a host of such programmes around the world.

Family

Without the role of the family, one cannot think of family life education. Individuals usually perform certain functions within the context of family which is not possible outside the family. In other words, family promotes certain functions among individuals. These functions are discussed below in relation to their role in family life education.

1. Biological functions

The husband and wife have the right to sexual expression as a way of sharing or showing their love for each other. This provides, not only sexual gratification for the spouses, but also strengthens their interpersonal relation, love and unity. As a result of the powerful and often binding emotions, which accompany sexual activities, unite a husband and wife. The sexual functions also help to stabilise the society. The family provides opportunities in which sexual drives find both expression as well as control. Parenting has also long term functions as the child is extremely helpless and dependent on the parents for food and shelter for a number of years.

2. Cultural functions

Family helps the child to acquire values, beliefs, customs and traditions of the society. It is in the family that the child's basic attitudes develop. If the family performs prayer in the morning, the child also learns and acquires the value of prayer and religiosity. What a child considers right and wrong largely depends on what the family in practice believes in. Later on, in their lives they may question these values and expectations of the family. It is in the context of this questioning that a child develops its value system for life.

3. Economic functions

There is a concept of optimum utilisation of income and labour. Families pool their resources so that they can have maximum satisfaction by budgeting efficiently. This economic cooperation within the family goes a long way towards fulfilling the economic function for society as a whole. It provides rewarding experiences for the spouses working together which cement their union to work towards family goals such as providing good education, health and comforts to their children. Families sometimes decide to supplement family income through various ways such as business etc., to maintain the social status of the family. It is the family which continues to supply human resources to the community and the country.

4. Emotional and psychological functions

Human beings are emotionally and psychologically sensitive and need the family to recharge themselves for their struggle in the world. Especially in times of crisis, the family works as a shock absorber, gives stability, and anchors the members emotionally. One can quit one's job, drop out of school and move to another city or village, but the family will always be there to provide support. Adolescent children and unemployed youth are supported by the family so that they do not lose heart and go astray. The family is the support in old age. The family as a compensatory agency, offers comfort and esteem to the worker who returns from the factory or office where he has no control or full satisfaction. With the changing values, norms and patterns of family, members sometime may not find required support from it. But even then, those who consider their own family as a 'problem family' should learn to understand problems in the family and to work on them to resolve them.

5. Educational function

Beginning with toilet training, language skills or socially acceptable behaviours, the family performs the important functions of education of children. Vocational skills of varying nature are also learnt at times within the family. Basic education is given by the family. The training prepares the child to learn fast in school and enables him to cope with the demands of schooling along with his/her classmates. Within the family, the child learns to conform and to submit to authority. It also learns to negotiate with authority. It also learns to exercise his freedom of thought and action, sense of responsibility and accountability.

6. Cosmic function

Man feels adrift in the large impersonal universe. He becomes largely alienated in the industrialised and urban society. Living in a family helps to give him a place in the cosmos that makes him connected to others and rooted to the earth. It has scope for initiating in him religion and spirituality.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

6. What are the emotional and psychological functions provided by family to its members?

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Community

MacIver defines community as 'an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence'. We know that a person rarely exists alone. He/she is linked in many ways to his/her fellow human beings who form a group. He/she can establish relations only with people who reside near him/her in a definite part of the territory. It is a fact that people who reside in a particular locality over a length of time, develop social likeness, have common social ideas, common traditions and a sense of belonging. This fact of social living and common specific area gives birth to community. These aspects in community help in providing and preserving family life education.

Let us now examine the three specific roles performed by community, which are very significant from the point of view of family life education.

1. Community acts as a preserver of values related to family life

Each older generation passes on values related to family life to each successive younger generation, which it has acquired from its previous generation. That becomes a set pattern or tradition in the communities. In this way, age old traditions as values are still prevailing in communities and societies. Sometimes we find that these values are slightly modified according to the changes taking place in societies. It may be either in the form of parents or grandparents vis-a-vis their respective children or grandchildren or in the form of sermons from religious or community leaders etc.

2. Community acts as a restraint

Community not only preserves values related to family life, but it also resists when there is any violation of the norms or values. It imposes certain restrictions or takes action against the individual who violates the norms and values. Other than this, the community may take certain strict measures like non-cooperation and boycotting the individual and group who tends to violate the values and norms.

3. Community provides moral policing

Community always tries to provide guidelines to the members about what to do or what not to do. It keeps an eye on each member's actions in the community or outside the community. In this way it keeps checks and balances in the community. As far as community is concerned, there are three major settings currently which offer family life education for adults (i) religious, social and professional organisations; (ii) mass media; and (iii) schools and universities.

Family Life Education

The most comprehensive programme in educating for family living have been developed and implemented by religious and secular organisations. Hundreds of diverse organisations and agencies are involved in offering a wide array of courses, workshops and services covering areas such as parent education, marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, child development etc. Traditionally invested with a belief in marriage and the family, the church is one institution in the western society which encompasses complete families and whose clientele spans the entire life cycle from birth to death. Many religious groups are involved in educative matters relevant to the well being of families. Besides religious denominations there are community organisations such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association (YMCA and YWCA) as well as the voluntary organisations that include a focus on family education in the form of courses and workshops offered to adults on issues related to marriage and family living. In all countries, religious organisations play similar role through their institutions and practices concerning various aspects of life.

Most countries have developed organisations to deal with their particular concerns in family life education. These often grow out of professional associations having a special interest in the family or government agencies, giving leadership to educational, social and health concerns of the family.

Role of mass media in promoting community attitude

Great public influence is exerted by television, radio, news-paper and magazines on moulding the values, ideas, attitudes and beliefs about marital and family living. While the quality input may be at times questioned, they, nonetheless offer alternative structures, role models and information and advice on a wide range of family related issues.

Role of schools and universities in providing family life education as a part of community education

Schools have begun introducing more and more learning opportunities for students on marriage and family issues. Many universities and colleges offer credit and non-credit continuing education programmes on marriage and family life for adults.

There is a need for an integrated effort or coherence between family and community. If there is a difference between what is observed in the family and what is practiced in the community, the individuals might face a crisis in their way of life. To avoid any such problems there is a need for orientation of community leaders. These leaders may be political leaders from the panchayat level up to national level, religious leaders of all religions and social leaders in civil life. These are the persons who plan and execute all the decisions which are relevant from the point of view of family life education.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

7. Which are the three major settings providing family life education for adults?

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11.7 ADVANTAGES OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Let us now discuss some of the advantages of family life education:

1. Family life education provides an educational role: The family has always existed as a basic social grouping among human beings, irrespective of the difference in its structure and functioning. There is of course no universal pattern. Families may be nuclear joint or extended, monogamous or polygamous; patriarchal etc. The structure and functions of the family are in transition, and its education role is one which is dynamic in nature.
2. Family life education acts as a crisis manager. Adolescents are growing up in a world in which they have to make more decisions for themselves than was done by any previous generations. They tend to experiment more with their lives, make choices and take risks, and learn by their own experiences rather than by those of others. This can lead to confusion, frustration, despair and risk taking of a kind which may be ultimately self-destructive. So family has important role to play in order to help people avoid all sorts of crisis.
3. Family life education provides skills for preventive action and knowledge for decision making particularly among adolescents: Each new generation of children face health challenges, but those faced by today's school age group seem particularly daunting. Children are confronted at an early age by situations that require knowledge for decision making and skills for preventive action. Very often adolescents find themselves under strong peer pressure to engage in high risk behaviour like drug and alcohol abuse and sometimes sexual abuse which can have serious implications on their lives. These issues should be addressed to the young and adolescents through family life education.
4. Family life education helps in understanding one's own role with changing family structure and functions: The rate of social change in most societies needs to redefine the roles of adult family members. Where tradition once established the norms for family behaviour, parents are now being challenged to re-examine their role and to accommodate the demands of changing family structures and functions.
5. Family life education helps in proper understanding of family life cycle: The impetus for family life education is based on the pervasive nature of the family life cycle. Each new phase of the cycle gives rise to new learning needs. In the past these learning needs were met through informal learning activities such as reading, seeking advice from peers and professionals (doctors, religious leaders and priests) and reflecting on personal experience. Some of these activities are now being offered as family life education through formal learning programmes. National programmes of planned parenthood, for example, have been established in a number of countries to curtail population growth and to promote improved standards of living. The belief that parenting, skills, knowledge and attitudes can be learned through programmes of education as opposed to learning through observation has given rise to a host of such programmes around the world.

Check Your Progress

Notes :a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

8 Describe any three needs of family life education.

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11.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we started our discussion by stating that India has a long tradition of closely bonded family systems. However, the society is always in transition and many families find it difficult to help young people preparing for adult life. Therefore, there is a need for family life education. We have enlisted various needs for family life education. It has various roles to perform, which vary from educational to crisis management especially among adolescents. That is why family life education is a broad and amorphous field. Anything which contributes to the total growth and well-being of the family can be included under the umbrella of family life education. Further, traditional Indian values related to family life education like *Ashramas* and *Purusarthas* are discussed. As family life education is a value-related concept, various types of values like moral ethical, cultural, religious and personal and their implications on family life were discussed. Also, various advantages of family life education have been pointed out.

In the next section, we discussed various broad and specific objectives of family life education. The major objectives are to develop a good knowledge about roles and functions of a family and values and skills necessary for adult life, marriage, parenthood etc. The ultimate aim of family life education is to create responsible and useful young citizens by inculcating the above-mentioned skills. To develop all these — knowledge, values and skills — various institutions like family and community have to perform different functions and roles so as to satisfy different needs. Like the individual, family performs various roles such as biological, cultural, economic, emotional, psychological, educational and cosmic functions. The community acts as a preserver and provider of family life education and controls those who violate values and norms. As far as community is concerned, there are three major settings which offer family life education: (1) religious, social, professional organisations; (ii) mass media and (iii) schools and universities.

11.9 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Discuss various components and objectives of family life education.
2. How do family life education help an individual to lead a healthy family life?

11.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Areus, M.E. Schvaneveldt, J.D., Moss, J. Js, (eds.) (1993): *Handbook of Family Life Education* (Foundation of Family Life Education), Sage Publications, Vol. 1. & Vol. 2.

UNESCO (1988): *Family Life Education: Package One*, PROAP, Bangkok.

Ceshadri, C. and Pandey, J.L: *Population Education — A National Source Book*. NCERT: New Delhi.

International Planned Parenthood Association (1985): *Growing Up in a Changing World. Part one: Youth Organisation and Family Life Education: An Introduction*. IDPF: London

Thomas Gracious (1995): *AIDS and Family Education*, Rawat Publications: New Delhi.

11.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Family life Education is a comprehensive field which comprises programmes that contribute to the total growth and well being of the family that is physical, mental, emotional, economic and spiritual.
2. The implications of responsible parenthood include:
 - a) To provide security to the children.
 - b) To provide their children with guidance and direction so that they develop right values.
 - c) To arrange for their education so as to develop their full potential and skills and capacities of learning their livelihood, besides, helping the children to grow as good human beings.
3. The objectives of family life education are:
 - a) To develop knowledge regarding the concept of family, its roles and functions.
 - b) To develop the ability to deal with family relationships and responsibility.
 - c) To develop life skills to cope with different situations.
 - d) To help in understanding and coping with changes in one's own life and changes in the society.
 - e) To develop knowledge about physiological process of ones own body.
4. Family life education helps to inculcate moral and ethical values in the individuals which promote marital fidelity etc. This is important in the context of HIV and AIDS because sexual contact is one of the main causes of infection.
5. In ancient India, all men and women were advised to practice Purusarthas and

Family Life Education

Ashramas which are directly related to family life. The four Purusarthas — Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha are ideals for which one must drive in conduct and behaviour. The four Ashramas — Brahmacharya, Grahasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa — form the psycho-moral basis of the Indian social system.

6. Family provides support and strength to an individual in times of crisis and difficulties.
7. Three major settings which offer family life education are:
 - a) Religious, social and professional organizations
 - b) Mass media
 - c) Schools and universities
8.
 - a) Family life education acts as a crisis manager
 - b) It provides skills for preventive action and knowledge for decision making particularly among adolescents.
 - c) It helps in understanding one's own role with the changing family structure and function.

Family Life Education

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 - c) It helps in understanding one's own role with the changing family structure and function.

UNIT 12 ROLE OF HOME, SCHOOL AND RELIGION

Structure

- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Objectives
- 12.3 Role of Home in Imparting Family Life Education
 - 12.3.1 Role of Home in Personality Building
 - 12.3.2 Home and Character Building
 - 12.3.3 Home and Marriage Roles
 - 12.3.4 Home and Sex Education
 - 12.3.5 Challenges before Parents as Family Life Educator
- 12.4 Role of School in Imparting Family Life Education
 - 12.4.1 Role of Schools as a Community
 - 12.4.2 Role of Teacher
 - 12.4.3 Role of School-Parent Collaboration
 - 12.4.4 Role of Peers
- 12.5 Role of Religion in Imparting Family Life Education
 - 12.5.1 Relationship between Family and Religion
 - 12.5.2 Religion and Family Life Education
- 12.6 Methods of Imparting Family Life Education
 - 12.6.1 Pre-school Stage
 - 12.6.2 School Stage (6-9 yrs.)
 - 12.6.3 Pre-adolescent Stage (9-12 yrs.)
 - 12.6.4 Adolescent Stage
- 12.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.8 Unit-end Exercises
- 12.9 Suggested Readings
- 12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Family life education assumes a lot of significance in today's world. You are already familiar with the concept of family life education and its importance. In this unit, we will discuss how family life education is to be imparted and what roles the agencies like home, school and religion can play in this.

What are home, school and religion? They may be defined as follows:

Home is the institution in which parents and children lead their lives together and create belongingness and bonding. School is an institution of the society to provide

education to its children and youth. Religion is a system of beliefs, faith and values about superhuman power and forces and other worldliness. Thus, they are institutions that socialise young members in cultural ideals, social norms and values, and roles and behaviour. We have discussed in the previous units how feelings of interdependence and belongingness, which are important for our emotional stability, are nurtured in a family. However, as more and more children go to school and the child's sphere is expanded from the family to educational institution, we also rely on school for socialising our children in family life. Religion particularly performs the task of integrating the individual to the society and makes him think of matters beyond worldly life. It does this through transmitting the values of family life to youth in particular. As you will see, the roles of these three crucial institutions are not always separate but integrated. Home, school and religion act in a collaborative manner to train children in family life education.

12.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit intends to give you an understanding of the roles home, school and religion play in imparting family life education. After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the role of home, school and religion in family life education;
- review the methods used by these agencies;
- suggest measures for effective family life education.

12.3 ROLE OF HOME IN IMPARTING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

We have already seen in unit 1 that family is an unique system. No other agency can replace its functions entirely. At home, children get an initiation into living together in family. Parents are the first teachers of a child. They ensure a secure environment for children who learn their roles and try to do various tasks according to their age and ability (Abbey-Harris et al. 1982). They get personal and emotional space to express themselves without any inhibitions. Home is where children are educated in values, in human relationships and in social skills. This makes home the most vital place to impart family life education.

Home can perform this task in both direct and indirect ways. Parents can directly teach their children about family values, about respect, love, care, empathy, understanding, sharing etc. Children catch these values indirectly, from the conduct and examples set by their parents. Home has an influence in planting seeds of developing children's personality, character building, married life and sex education.

12.3.1 Role of Home in Personality Building

As you know, personality is a product of heredity and environment, both of which depend on the family. Home is the primary environment, which has formative influence on the development of a child's personality. The child develops integrated personality. Learns self-control, acquires confidence, and learns skills to handle situations and relationships by observing the family members. If parents ensure family reunions with other relatives of the extended family, share sorrows and joys with each other then it also helps the child realize the importance of relationships and bonds. Moreover,

the trust and attachment that parents share strengthen the belief of children that relationships can last irrespective of problems at times. On the other hand, family disharmony can have negative impact on children. In the extreme case of broken homes and disintegrated families children show personality disorders, adjustment problems, and inability to handle relationships. Children who see domestic violence and disharmony among parents are prone to repeat these in their own adult lives. In this way, family provides continuous learning to children.

12.3.2 Home and Character Building

Character gives us strength to conduct ourselves according to certain principles, upholding higher order values in life. Character teaches us to be honest, stand firm in adversity, face challenges, be just, develop trust and not to fall prey to temptations. The process of character building begins in the family. Acting as educators, parents directly train children to follow certain ideals and not retreat in times of trial and turbulations. Indirectly but more profoundly, the conduct of parents in different situations, the harmonious environment at home because of mutual understanding and love between parents act as a model for children to believe in family values.

12.3.3 Home and Marriage Roles

Marriage is a universal institution in our society. Home performs the task of educating children in marriage values and roles mainly by presenting them a model in their parents. Children learn their future roles as wife and husband by observing their own mother and father. They observe the various tasks performed by their parents to make a home out of a house. They learn how husband and wife share household work and family responsibilities and cooperate with each other. They also learn a great deal about parenting from the way their parents bring them up.

12.3.4 Home and Sex Education

As you know, marriage legitimises sexual relations with a partner of the opposite sex. Sex has an important place in marriage bond and family life because it develops intimacy, care and emotional attachment between the spouses. Sexual satisfaction of the couple is an important factor of the success of family life. Sex education, thus, becomes an essential component of family life education. Nowadays, due to exposure to mass media and cinema, children get to know about sex-related facts very early in life. Any wrong or incorrect notion and behaviour can cause immense harm to the psyche of children besides, having repercussions in their married life later. It is, therefore, the responsibility of parents to remain watchful and provide adequate guidance and counselling to their children in these crucial matters.

12.3.5 Challenges Before Parents as Family Life Educators

There is no doubt that parents have the primary role in educating their children about family life. But they have to meet with certain challenges in fulfilling this goal. These barriers are often of their own making. Hence, they can overcome these by self-reflection and analysis.

Sometimes parents are over-protective of their children to the extent of impeding their spirit of exploration. They do not let the child learn the practical skills of life. On the other extreme are parents who have unrealistic expectations from their children that hamper their self-worth. If the child is not able to meet their demands, they grow doubtful about his/her potential.

Excessive engagement of parents in professional work leaves the child lonely who has no opportunity to learn in company of adults. The child has no one who would listen to his/her daily happenings and events and help in areas where the child needs support. The child may feel rejected, develop hostile nature and may grow detached from family life. Some 'strict' parents are too rigid to allow their children any flexibility to do what they like. It creates fear in the child's mind, who gradually becomes meek and submissive. On the other hand, if parents allow too many comforts and luxuries, or become over protective the child may not learn to become responsible or take decisions independently. The child also has a mind and will. Opportunities should be provided to him for the exercise of independent thinking and freedom of action. His/her likes and dislikes should be duly taken care of. He/she should be allowed to participate in family matters.

Parenting is both a joyous and responsible task. It demands a good deal of involvement as well as judgement. To become successful family life educators, parents must realize that they have a lot of responsibility as role models for the child. As they do, so the child will eventually do. Any act of negligence on their part would set an unwanted precedent for child. Parents must be able to understand the needs of a child and address them. The parent-child relationship should be democratic, not authoritarian. Parents should encourage their children to talk to them, share their feelings and emotions, and discuss their day-to-day matters. Parents must also ensure that their children cultivate self-esteem by developing their potentials.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1. Home is an ideal setting for family life education. Comment.

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12.4 ROLE OF SCHOOL IN IMPARTING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

School is the second most important agency of transmission of knowledge, culture and socialisation. Its role is as important as that of family because a child learns some of the long lasting lessons of life in school where he/she spends long years. In the school going age, the child's world widens to incorporate other experiences. It is in the school that the child comes under the influence of peers, teachers and other adults. School is a miniature society where children learn the skills to live in larger society. All this makes school an ideal setting for education on family life.

You may ask why, the *school* should educate pupils in *family life*? It is because many times the parents are not able to answer competently children's queries regarding family and sex, and tend to evade them. It could be because parents are still traditional in outlook and feel inhibitions. Or they may not have the requisite knowledge. Not all parents can be expected to be equally efficient in this task either. This may hinder the growth of healthy attitudes among children and make them susceptible to myths

and misconceptions. On the other hand, the school, as an institutional mechanism of education, can take up education related to family issues in a formal, organised and methodical manner and help children make informed choices. We will discuss below the role of School as a community of teachers, of parent teacher collaboration and of peers in Family Life Education.

12.4.1 Role of School as a Community

The school community comprises a number of groups and agencies which work together to achieve the best educational and personal outcomes for students. These may include school staff like teachers, other professionals, administrators and other support staff, parents/guardians, interested individuals, community organisations and students themselves. The school's method of teaching and the overall atmosphere has a bearing on the child's growth and development. Under the guidance of the principal, the school community must assess the school environment, the teaching methods employed and other extra-curricular activities to ensure that children develop cooperative spirit learn from each other and grow in conducive environment. The community should facilitate harmonious interaction between students from different backgrounds. Above all, the school ambience and spirit has a major influence in the development of the student as a person and a good member of a group called family.

12.4.2 Role of Teacher

Being a teacher yourself, you very well know how influential a teacher can be in a pupil's life. A teacher is much more than a staff employed to teach lessons. His influence is not confined to his formal contact with students in the classroom. It is much stronger out of classroom-activities, general behaviour and visible qualities. The teacher has maximum interaction and exchanges with students. Teacher is the friend philosopher-guide to the students. This requires the teacher to extend his/her sphere from the classroom to the world of students.

The teacher, therefore, is in a better position to give sex education, one of the components of family life education, to children as a component of curricular lessons or family life education. A teacher can be effective only if he/she is knowledgeable, empathetic and creative. The teacher should ensure that the classroom atmosphere provides emotional ease to the children to express their feelings comfortably. The teacher can take up sex education by beginning to interact freely with the students. He/she will have to create a forum where children can speak out their personal problems. The teacher should also assess their curiosity and needs of understanding man-woman relationship and sex and take necessary measures. Acting as a mentor, he/she also has to assist children in finding solutions to their problems.

The teacher can also contribute in the development of a child's integrated personality. He/she should avoid replying to the child in a sarcastic manner, as it would hurt the child's self-respect. Teacher should let the child know that it is normal to commit mistakes in ignorance and the best thing is to learn to avoid them. Moreover, the teacher must express confidence in the child so that the child does not get pessimistically obsessed with his/her past mistakes or feel too guilty. He/she must avoid any activity which may make the child feel rejected. Instead, such targets should be set before the child that he/she is able to achieve them. The teacher must take care not to prop up boys and girls against each other in any task as this affects gender relations negatively. The repercussions of this may turn into gender-insensitive attitudes continuing well into adulthood (Alameda Country School, 1957).

The teacher should let children experience working in groups. This would enable them to work with others, to help and be helped. These qualities would add to healthy family living. Children will be able to adjust better to home life. Family life education fulfils not only the immediate but also the future needs of individuals and families. For instance, children learn to play their present roles as children and also future roles related to parenting.

The teacher should help children develop a sense of pride in their families and the improvement of the whole quality of life, he/she had made contribution to. Education related to family living can be incorporated in any subject. Teachers can use the inquiry approach and transact values in a scientific manner rather than imposing any moral authority on students.

12.4.3 Role of School-Parent Collaboration

Schools ought to collaborate with parents in family education programmes so that students participate in it in large numbers. Sometimes parents equate family life education with sex education only and feel uncomfortable with any group teaching. Convincing parents that sex education is only one aspect of family life education, which encompasses many other courses, can overcome this hurdle.

Schools should collaborate with parents and the wider community to work jointly for the well-being of children. The involvement of parents must be optimized in family life education programme in schools. Parents should be a part of the process of introducing the curriculum of family life education. Teachers must recognize parents as the primary educators of their children in matters of sex and gender relationships. This would be possible by continuously consulting them on the material to be discussed in class. Teachers, on their part, should encourage parent-child interaction and help children discuss family life topics with parents as part of homework activities, as well as in their normal conversations.

12.4.4 Role of Peers

A peer group is the most intimate primary group of a child when he/she is growing up. School and neighbourhood provide children access to peers who have an important influence in their lives. Interaction with peers contributes to the development of cognitive, emotional and social skills in children. The effect of peer group is distinctly visible on their behaviour and attitudes. It is in peer groups that autonomy gains significance and finds expression in a variety of ways through group activities (Berk, 2004). Children are more open and free among their friends and classfellows with regard to various experiences they have everyday and their growing up situations. However, there are shortcomings in depending uncritically on the peer group for family life education. A peer group can have both positive and negative influences on a child. As children are usually curious about sex and marriage, which they feel inhibitive to share with their parents, the peer group emerges as the free space to interact. However, they may be misled and misguided by peers in this respect. As the peer group members are themselves not well informed on issues related to family life, they might transmit faulty information about sex and marriage. In the absence of liberal and healthy interaction between boys and girls in our society, peer groups may transmit unhealthy attitudes towards the opposite gender. However, it is better to learn this way than from undesirable elements in society.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

2. Suggest some activities for elementary level children to familiarise them with the concept of family.

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3. Discuss the role of teacher in imparting family life education.

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12.5 ROLE OF RELIGION IN IMPARTING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

Family studies, religion/theology and education are not watertight compartments. In fact, they have much overlapping. The combinations of these areas constitute arenas such as family life education, religious education, and studies of family and religion. This section likewise focuses on the meeting point of these three areas in 'family life education'. Religion includes formal religious institutions and belief systems as well as theological and spiritual perspectives. Family life encompasses sharing life's joys and sorrows, interpersonal relationships, readiness for mutual sacrifice and help in marriage and parenting, as an individual as well as member of a group. Education is essential for development of an individual (Cunningham and Scanzoni, 1993).

12.5.1 Relationship Between Family and Religion

We need to clarify first how religion and family, two seemingly different arenas, have strong interrelations. More often than not, family follows a religion and organises itself according to its prescriptions about ethics and rituals. In functional perspective, religious institutions have a strong relationship with various stages of family life cycle. Religiosity can help strengthen family bonds and ties, bring marital happiness and provide support to overcome family stress. For instance, faith helps families cope with the trauma of bringing up a mentally challenged child. Practices that have not-so-visible religious content like community dining, respect for one another, extending help to the needy etc, contribute to family values. Religion adds to the welfare of individuals by extending the network of social support.

Religious and moral education is essential for all-round development of a person. Both religion and family inculcate in individuals values and attitudes for harmonious and responsible social living beyond self-interest. The arenas of religion, family and community, influence identity-development (Cunningham and Scanzoni, 1993).

12.5.2 Religion and Family Life Education

Traditionally, religious institutions have been educating people on family life. They emphasise the significance of family through life cycle rituals. Stages related to 'hatching, matching and dispatching', that is, from birth of an infant to the wedding to funeral, are components in the life of a family as well as that of individuals. These various periods have religious ceremonies associated with them. At the time of setting up of family, religious institutions provide a location for the wedding to happen. After the birth of a child, the religious institution gets involved. The next stages facilitating the child's individuation process also witness religious rituals called *rites de passage*. Later, religious institutions facilitate mate selection and marriage of children, and provide support to parents when children leave home. So, many family education programmes can be initiated in the arena of religion. Religion also preaches about duties, obligations and modes of behaviour among various members of the family—older and younger, between husband and wife, parents and children and intra-members of the extended family.

Religious institutions can propose programmes with themes on family life. For instance, in the West, the early 1960s saw the beginning of 'marriage enrichment programmes' with the support of Church. The participants in the programme were married couples who wanted to improve their own marriages and help others. There were also programmes for those who had faced difficulty in family situations such as sexual harassment and domestic violence. At times, those who face such disturbing situations within the pristine sheltered environment of family find it difficult to let off. Along with the spiritual need to be able to forgive, there is a greater need to make the offenders realize their action and let them suffer. Parenting education is also receiving a lot of attention in various family life education programmes in religious settings. Programmes such as Systematic Training for Effective Parents (STEP) or Parent Effectiveness Training (PET) have begun (Cunningham and Scanzoni, 1993).

We know very well that religious doctrines influence family matters like marriage and child rearing, including eating habits. Guidelines related to abortion, birth control, role of women etc, give direction to people's behaviour. Therefore, education of sexuality can be organised in a religious setting. These programmes are meant for children and youth of various ages, and parents to discuss sexuality and other issues.

Religious groups act as communities of care by strengthening bonds among people. The practice of counselling by the clergy, the *purohits* and the *pundits* continues despite there being many mental health professionals. Moreover, any moment of crisis acts as a 'teachable moment' during which religious institutions strengthen the bond they share with people. Such instances also prove to be the learning ground for others who might face similar situations in their lives. For instance, a family, which has a member addicted to substance abuse, can share with the community its own experience so that they can learn from it. Similarly, religious community can spread awareness on HIV and AIDS and its transmission and mobilize resources to support people suffering from HIV and AIDS.

Educators should look for religious leaders as resource persons who are able to support the goals of family life education. It is imperative to take into account the religious concerns of people before designing any family life education programme. Also relevant dimensions from family life education must be incorporated in designing religious education programmes. Family life education has something to offer to

religious education and vice versa. Thus, a mutual and integrated approach must be followed keeping in mind that religion and family life education share a symbiotic relationship.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

4. What role can religion play in imparting family life education?

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12.6 METHODS OF IMPARTING FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

In this section, our focus will be to discuss the various methods of imparting family life education. What are these methods? Usually parents are expected to know these and develop their own ways based on received wisdom. Further, some of them rely on simplistic childcare books that give some guidelines to comply for family living. Some of them not being based on specialized methods can lead to problems in knowledge as well as communication. The methods used for family life education, therefore, are also those which should be followed by both the home and school. We discuss them below according to the stages of child development: pre-school, school, pre-adolescent and adolescent stage.

12.6.1 Pre-school Stage

As we have discussed in detail in the first section, family plays a dominant role in training the child in family life in this stage. Children seek love affection and care. They are generally curious about various natural and social phenomena. Parents job is to encourage such inquisitiveness and answer their questions honestly and sincerely without ever ridiculing them or trying to evade them.

Parents should let their children participate in all family affairs and learn by observing. The task of parents is to *teach by example*: so parents must practice values and ideals themselves.

12.6.2 School Stage (6-9 yrs.)

During this period, parents need to be careful about their demeanour since children observe them keenly and develop attitudes like theirs. Children are coming in contact with the world outside the home also and are influenced by this wider exposure. Affection from parents makes children feel loved. They learn it is important to give and receive affection. However, children also learn by observing *gender roles*. If their father does not respect their mother's work at home, children also learn not to look upon it with respect and form a stereotype about it. Media, especially the visual media, may introduce children to certain aspects of life some of which may be undesirable and untimely and are better if introduced later. Therefore, parents should

try to be present with children while they are watching television and discuss with them the programmes seen. At school, the teacher should introduce his/her pupils to family life education through a curriculum designed especially for this purpose. It may not be taught as a separate subject, yet can be included in social studies classes where children learn about family.

12.6.3 Pre-adolescent Stage (9-12 yrs.)

This is the stage when some body changes start happening, leaving the child confused. Therefore, concepts of maleness and femaleness can be dealt with them in an age-appropriate manner. Children must feel happy to be male or female since this directly influences their self-esteem. They must also learn to respect people belonging to the other sex.

Parents and teachers must create a culture of open discussion with children on any issue at this stage. Parents have to be like friends and guide to their children. Parents and teachers should ensure healthy interaction among children of opposite sex. In this stage, children may feel attraction for other sex. However, they must be encouraged to share these thoughts with their guardians. Schools can also observe children and counsel them on this aspect. Ideas of any gender discrimination must be avoided. Healthy open friendships and companionship should be encouraged.

In classrooms, teachers must create an open space for boys and girls to share their growing age issues, relations within the family and ways to solve them well. This would help children realize that they are not alone in feeling as they do. Such interactions could also be organised separately for boys and girls. The teacher can encourage children to seek guidance and talk about and write about things that worry them. He/she should win their confidence so as to facilitate this. He/she can give them some statements to complete such as "I usually worry about...." Teacher has to deal with such matters sensitively. Later, he/she can mark out common areas of concern and set a time for discussion on them. If need, he/she can call students individually and speak to them or arrange small group discussions. Many a time, he/she may find the children expressing, "I feel my parents do not like me as much. They like my elder sister more". "I keep fighting with my brother. What to do?". Such free expression can help the teacher address the problems of children better. The teacher can use puppets to help children learn. With the help of puppets, he/she can have children express how they feel in certain situations. This can act as a cathartic method of venting out feelings (Alameda County School, 1957). The teacher can also use playing in a simulated situation in a family.

The teacher should impart sex education to boys and girls separately and on reaching maturity sometimes together. Male teachers for boys and females for girls also makes the tasks easier. A **question box** can be kept where children would drop their questions anonymously. The teacher must assure his/her students that their queries are important and will receive adequate attention. Once a week, he/she can read these questions and discuss the relevant issues.

If children are not comfortable with such direct approach, then the teacher can take up a **story** with a problem similar to the ones faced by some children in the class. While discussing the life and feelings of the unknown character in the third person, children can find it easier to express themselves. They would be able to analyse the situation better and come up with solutions.

Along with this, **workshops** can be organised to help children in personality development, self-discovery, communication skill development and physical education. The teacher can show motion pictures, cartoons etc., relating to the life situations of children. Schools must also keep books in accordance with the cognitive level of children on various issues related to sex education and human relationships in various types of situations in a family set up.

The teacher can also plan role-playing or sociodrama to help children analyse their feelings and give them desirable direction. The problem selected must be of immediate concern to the children. The teacher might have noticed an incident in the playground or classroom or in a family. Such enactment of roles will help children feel how others behave and examine different ways of handling a situation. In case the teacher finds that the child needs expert intervention on any matter. The teacher must consult the other teachers, the school counsellor and refer the child to him/her for **counselling**.

12.6.4 Adolescent Stage

Adolescence is the stage of transition between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents express a desire to be treated not as children but as growing adults. They want parents to reduce their protective role and enable them create degree of autonomy. In this stage, teachers and parents need to guide adolescents constantly.

At school, the teacher can **teach human reproductive system** in biology classes. It is important that the teacher himself/herself is positive and normal while teaching it. The teacher can use some of the methods mentioned in the pre-adolescence stage such as the use of writing to vent out feelings, sociodrama, and open discussions. Programmes must be organised with the objective of making available the resources, delaying the beginning of sexual activity and decision-making (Arcus et al. 1993, Vol. 2). **Experts** (such as doctors) must be roped in to interact with adolescents to spread awareness regarding Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) - its transmission and prevention- and other sex-related diseases. They must also be told about the harms of substance abuse. However, sex is only aspect in his/her coping with problems at this stage. Discussion needs not be confined to sex only. He/she need to understand clearly issues of self-dependence, responsibilities and contribution to pleasant atmosphere in the family. Sibling-parental and other relationships and sharing of household chores, avoidance of conflicts etc. are no less important.

School-Parent Collaboration, as has been suggested earlier, can also encourage parents attend programmes in schools to know about the sexual development of their children. They can know about the children's usual questions regarding sex and acquire information from professionals to respond to such queries. They can also gain information on HIV and AIDS.

Religious organizations can facilitate counselling for adolescents and adults. Religious educators need to be sensitive towards the family situations of children. For instance, none must say to a child abused by his/her father that God is like father. Here the experience of child does not go in consonance with the qualities of God. Likewise, those adults who have suffered in childhood because of their parents will not be able to appreciate the statement 'honour your father and mother'. Pre-marital counselling can ensure effective execution of one's responsibilities after marriage. Media, newspapers and magazines also publish columns to advice people on sex and marriage related problems and intra-family communications. Overall, method of dialogue, conversation, discussion, open debate, freedom of expression, welcome friendships

and respect for their views on all matters in the family, be the usual methods of family life education.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

5. Discuss the methods adopted by school in family life education at adolescence stage.

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12.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have discussed about the roles of home, school and religion in educating children and youth in family life. Parents act as role models and provide an environment for the child to observe and learn qualities and values. They influence the development of personality and character of the child. Parents also give some of the initial lessons in sex education.

Since parents are not always well equipped to impart family life education, we rely on school, where a child spends formative years. The school and teacher socialise children in values and ideals for family living. The peer group also influences children's ways of living. Peer group has to be chosen carefully. Friendships have to be formed wisely.

Religion has an integral relationship with family. It teaches values and morals crucial for family living. It strengthens family ties and hence must take up measures to strengthen family cohesiveness. Religious institutions can make a qualitative difference to the way people perceive family life.

The methods for imparting family life education are both general and specific. In pre-school stage family educates mainly through examples and actions of parents. In school, the teacher can follow both formal and informal methods: social studies lessons and discussions. In pre-adolescent stage, teachers should facilitate healthy interaction among boys and girls. They can use various methods like discussion, writing exercises, theatre activities etc, to understand children's problems. During adolescence, the teacher acquaints children with the human reproductive system. It is where the teacher has to give full-fledged sex education, making them informed about abortion STDs, HIV/AIDS etc.

12.8 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Discuss the role of home in imparting family life education.
2. Discuss the role of school in imparting family life education.
3. Describe the different methods which should be used for family life education by the school.

12.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

Abbey-Harris, Nancy; Steven Bingell and Mari Lynch (eds.) (1982): *Family Life Education: Resources for the Elementary Classroom Grades 4, 5, 6*, Network Publications: Santa Cruz, Bombay

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Berk, Laura E. (2004): *Child Development*, Sixth Edition Pearson-Longman: Delhi.

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Hurlöck, Elizabeth (2003): *Development Psychology*, Tata McGraw-Hill: Delhi.

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12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Children grow in home under the nurture and care of parents. The personality of children develops in the secure environment of home. Children learn a great deal of values, ideals, morals from their parents' conduct. As they see, so they behave later in their married life.
2. Various activities can convey the myriad meanings of 'family'. For instance, you can let children know what a 'generation' means. In this activity, children will know about their family in the past. They can find out the similarities and differences between their experience and the childhood experience of a family member of another generation. Other activities can be learning about family traditions, tasks that families enjoy doing, recalling of memorable family events (Abbey-Harris et al., 1982).
3. The teacher, trained in family life education, has a very important role. he/she relates to children and devises activities to inculcate appropriate values in them. Teacher has to provide sex education to growing-up children, especially to adolescents, he/she has to ensure children confide in him/her so that they can share their doubts and receive proper guidance.
4. Religion must exert a positive influence in family life education. Since it is an integral part of people's lives, religion sustains family living and can provide sexuality education. Religion, having big hold on society, can promote family living among young and adults.

Family Life Education

5. At adolescence stage, teachers, help adolescents learn about human reproductive system and about sexuality. They can organize special programmes, using visual media, on sexually transmitted diseases. HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, etc., for transmission for proper information. At this stage, adolescents need guidance and counselling for which the school must make provisions. Schools can collaborate with parents and enlist their cooperation in giving sex education to adolescents.

UNIT 13 BUILDING AND SUSTAINING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Structure

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Objectives
- 13.3 Understanding Relationships and Family Relationships
 - 13.3.1 Motherhood, Fatherhood, Parenthood
 - 13.3.2 Culture of Life
- 13.4 Various Stages of Family Life
- 13.5 The Dynamics of Family Relationships
 - 13.5.1 Migration and Adhoc/Temporary/Residential Separation
 - 13.5.2 Family Disorganisation
 - 13.5.3 Reconstructing the Family
- 13.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.7 Unit-end Exercises
- 13.8 Suggested Readings
- 13.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.1 INTRODUCTION

The present society is characterised, among other things, by the declining importance of all primary groups including the family. The family acts simultaneously as an educative unit and a socio-cultural agency. The sex and hunger urges, economic compulsions, physical and emotional supports and the cultural traditions have provided the theoretical justification for the existence of the family. The famous philosopher, Confucius, thought that happiness and prosperity would prevail if everyone would behave 'correctly' as a family member. You must have read about the importance of the Indian family in the first unit of this block. A family does not consist simply of a number of individuals. Rather, it itself is an inclusive integrated entity that includes the complex inter relationships and interactions occurring among them.

Family has been regarded as the cornerstone of society by many social thinkers. Marriage between a man and a woman is the basis of the formation of a family from times immemorial. It is in the family that children are born, cared for, reared and provided education for life. Over the years, global societies have witnessed shifts in family patterns. Radical changes are being brought into life-styles through progress and reforms. The recent phenomena of globalisation, consumerism and occupational patterns have created a diversity of family and household. Along with these changes, new social problems and personal difficulties arise to increase and multiply and solved. The institutions of family and marriage, however, continue to exist as basics of social organisations. In this unit we shall discuss in detail the various stages of family life and the dynamics of building and sustaining family relationships.

Although dramatic changes in the character of family can be seen in several societies abroad, most Indians hold on to the traditional family life, culture and traditions. Family is the basic unit of any society. The stability of family life with parents and children is fundamental to all human society and its long-term survival. The sacredness of marriage, its permanence and its mutuality of love are the major forces for preserving this basic unit in the society everywhere across the globe.

It is proved by an abundance of statistical evidence based on empirical studies that family discord and divorce are continuously on the rise. Undergoing the process and the consequences of divorce solves some problems when the two partners find it difficult to continue to live together, but the separation can be a mentally as well as economically shattering experience for them. The after-effects of divorce, especially for the children have a damaging effect when the issue of taking the custody arises. The practice of awarding custody primarily to one parent raises certain problems for everyone involved - child, father and mother. Studies have proved that such an emotional experience may lead the children towards deviant behaviour, which may even lead to crime. In a study by Kirkpatrick in 1951, it was found that parental divorce showed greater influence than bereavement on the marital adjustment of grown-up off spring. This study shows that the children show long-term effects in their life because of parental discord and dissolution of the marriage. However, it may prove to be a less of an evil, than living together in a unpleasant quarrelsome atmosphere in the family.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to provide you with an understanding of the significance of family relationships. The process and importance of building and sustaining family relationships is also discussed. The unit will facilitate your understanding as teachers to:

- appreciate the significance of family relationships in the value formation in children;
- understand the various stages of family life;
- discuss the dynamics of building and sustaining family relationships;
- suggest ways of strengthening the Indian Family system.

13.3 UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

In India, family relations and the culture and traditions related to them are held in strong significance. Therefore, it is apt to discuss the basics of family life and its richness in forming responsible citizens of our society.

Relationship and bonding are central to family life. Change in family and household composition have brought about a shift in the expectations of people from their relationships. Today relationships has become something active. One has to work it out. It depends on winning the trust of the other person. In fact, sustainability of most marriages in developed countries depends on this shift in expectations from the partner. Relationship depends on the extent of communication and collaboration between people. Emotional communication is part and parcel of love between spouses

and between parents and their children. Although much transformation has taken place in the developed nations, the traditional Indian society has not changed much. A lot of bonding and relationships exist within and between families both in rural and urban areas. However, one can also observe the influence of the western culture or changes in occupational and consumerist life-style gaining momentum in the Indian sub-continent.

The most important recipe for the success and sustainability of marriage and family life is the ability to bond permanently and in a healthy manner. The ability to bond depends on the earlier experiences of reliable love. For instance, a child who has never doubted the commitment of both parents to each other and to himself/herself, will naturally develop trust and openness.

In many parts of the world, there are attempts to present sex as an activity with little regard for the relationship. Such attempts offend the dignity of human beings. In fact, it strikes at the heart of the marital relationship. If allowed to grow, in course of time, this could undermine the family and ultimately the society.

Family life education is intended to help young people in exploring the meaning of human person, expressing oneself through a unique body in its intrinsically masculine and feminine form. Through one's body, a person can live out to the fullest his/her highest calling: 'To love'.

A family cannot come into existence without the biological union that results in offspring. A female can conceive with the cooperation and sharing of a male. A child must necessarily have a father, a mother, and a home to grow. This, is the fact and the experience of all societies from time immemorial. This concept presents sexual union in marriage as an extraordinary act of total giving of self that has the potential to co-create a new human being. A true relationship leads to a meaningful and fruitful life.

13.3.1 Motherhood, Fatherhood and Parenthood

Family is a natural and constant institution in human and social life. Motherhood and fatherhood are, therefore, constants and the family cannot be redefined. It exists as a norm in all societies except in cases which differ from this norm due to widowhood or single parent families as a result of divorce or separation. In fact, motherhood and fatherhood exist as archetypes of human existence with much more than mere biological qualities.

There is no recognition of what a mother is, unless one has personal experience of a 'real mother' naturally in relation to her children. Similarly fatherhood can be known only through lived experience in a family setting.

Parenthood has a connotation different from motherhood and fatherhood. Human being is the only living creature that is not influenced only by built in natural instinctive mechanism to guide most aspects of one's behaviour. It goes on learning as it grows and lives as a social being. One has to use relationships with others in order to develop talents, skills and ideas. This is an essential condition for growth towards personal maturity. Family is the first environment which helps a person to relate oneself to others with natural love and cooperation. With the entry of a person of the opposite sex in one's life, a new kind of experience and relationship is developed which finds fulfilment in marriage. Together they learn to leave behind the 'I' and

'you' and think of themselves as 'we', trust and understanding grow. They become more open to each other revealing and sharing their inner being, feelings, values and choices.

Every person is meant to be born in a family and called upon to build a new family. Only by accepting family life and its responsibilities seriously a person can learn to reach out to others in love, respect and with a sense of service mentality. The joys and worries of planning, conceiving and bringing up children and social tasks and duties of family compel the couple to forget the self and become more involved with others. Therefore, we may say that a responsible parenthood is the real parenthood. One has to be responsible to oneself, one's family, spouse, children and the society.

13.3.2 Culture of Life

There is need for a strategy and rationale for promoting family life because of the current trend which calls for greater 'individual rights'. There is demand for individual rights based on privacy and convenience. Some even go to the extent of demanding the same under fundamental rights. The call for 'rights of individual' overshadow concern for common good.

Denying the rights of the terminally ill to choose death over life is not inhuman. The Indian constitution and legislations do not permit euthanasia. Similarly protecting the 'right to life' of an unborn child should not be considered as violence against women. It is the duty and responsibility of parents and young people to protect human life from conception to natural death. In abortion, a weak and defenceless child is brutally murdered by those who are supposed to love and care for the child most: the parents and health care professionals.

Many young people are unaware that a conception at new life is formed. Conception takes place at the moment of fertilisation: i.e., the moment when the father's sperm and the mother's egg cell meet. People with vested interests may make various interpretations. Scientifically, one thing is clear that conception refers to fertilisation and not implantation. Implantation takes place about five days after fertilisation. The zygotes starts to grow as any other living being. There are several anti-life forces at work in the world who try to put forward justification for violation of human rights by them and rationale for their struggle on preferences for individual rights over common good.

It is, therefore, apt that we teach the young people a culture of life in the face of such public opposition through false propaganda about individual freedom to abort or to take life (euthanasia). Freedom is a divine gift and to live to its demands fully, is our responsibility. There is a tendency of cohabitation among some people in the developed countries. Such trends have resulted to some extent in replacing marriages, rise in rates of divorce, increase in abortion and the number of children born out of wedlock. Some nations have legalised same sex marriages. In such societies, there are pressure groups to recognize homosexual marriages and family status for people living in same sex unions so that benefits exclusively meant for natural and traditional families are also made available to homosexual couples. Homosexual act under section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is a criminal act as on date. A Public Interest Litigation filed in Delhi High Court by an NGO to repeal this section was rejected (September, 2004). The Law Commission of India observed that Indian society in general disapproved homosexuality and this was strong enough to justify treating it as a criminal offence, even if adults indulged in it in private. Our objective is not condemning

such behaviour but understanding how the society perceives it. As a result of life-styles which promote divorce, same sex unions, euthanasia and escalating rates of abortion, the bedrock of family is being shaken. There are less number of children in the families and an increase in the aging population which will not be supported by the young people.

In order to counter such negative trends and to preserve a value based society, there is need to promote a 'culture of life' in which virtues are cultivated. The ability to bond requires a culture which allows the young man and young woman to wait until a commitment is made before embarking upon sexual intimacy. The wounds and emotional scarring caused by the casual experimentation into which young people are led, deprives them, to a great extent, of the possibility of permanent bonding. Commitment and waiting for the right person to whom to commit are the bases of a stable and happy sexuality, marital life strong family bonding.

In order to preserve the rich heritage and value of the traditional Indian family, there is a need to collaborate with broader community for stable and healthy family life. There is also a need to encourage governments and various social systems to have an open policy to promote stable family life keeping in view the needs of the society.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

1. Describe briefly the concept of motherhood and fatherhood.

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13.4 VARIOUS STAGES OF FAMILY LIFE

Marriage

Marriage is an institution which admits men and women to family life. It is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially and legally permitted to have children; the right to have children implying the right to sexual relations. Edward Westermarck defined marriage as the "more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring". According to John Levy and Ruth Munroe, people get married because of the feeling that being in a family is the only proper, indeed the only possible way to live. People do not marry because it is their social duty to perpetuate the institution of family or because the scriptures recommend matrimony or because they have fallen in love with each other, but because they lived in a family as children and cannot get over the feeling that being in a family is the only proper way to live in a society. In almost all societies, one or the other form of marriage exists. In India, according to traditional Hindu Law, marriage is a sacrament rather than a civil contract. It is a 'sanskara' or purificatory ceremony obligatory to every Hindu. The Hindu religious books have enjoined marriage as a duty because an unmarried man cannot perform some of the most important religious duties. Traditionally the marriage is considered a union between two families rather than two individuals.

The birth of a child brings about a host of changes within a family. The couple who were husband and wife, now also become parents and have the responsibility of rearing or parenting a child. Rearing or parenting is the process of raising and educating a child from birth until adulthood. This is usually done in a child's family by the mother and father (i.e. the biological parents). Where parents are unable or are not present to provide this care, it is usually taken on by close relatives (including older siblings) and grandparents, adoptive parents, foster parents, godparents, or institutions (such as group homes or orphanages).

Rearing a child includes love, advice, utilizing rewards, praise and discipline (or punishment) as tools of behavioural control. In some societies physical punishment (e.g. spanking) is prohibited by law and a number of parents have adopted non-physical approaches to child discipline. Most experts now agree that physical punishment is not an effective behaviour modification tool. The term 'child training' implies a specific type of parenting that focusses on holistic understanding of the child. The taking children seriously philosophy sees both praise and punishment as manipulative and harmful to children and advocates other methods to reach agreement with them. The term 'attachment parenting' seeks to create strong emotional bonds and avoid physical punishment, with discipline being accommodated by interactions recognizing a child's emotional needs.

Being the parent of an infant is a major responsibility. Infants require a lot of care including (but not limited to) feeding, bathing, changing diapers, and health care. Common parenting issues in infancy are teething, sleep, breastfeeding, baby bottle, diaper rash, baby colic, immunization, childhood development, paternal bond, pacifier use, circumcision, day care etc.

As the infant grows into a toddler, the responsibilities of the parents include (but not limited to) feeding, bathing, toilet training, ensuring their safety, teaching, and attending to their wellness. For the pre-school children, parents are responsible for feeding, bathing, teaching, ensuring their safety, and attending to their wellness. Parents are expected to make decisions about pre-school education. Parenting responsibilities during the school years include (but not limited to) feeding, assisting with education, ensuring their safety and wellness, and providing them with a loving and nurturing home environment.

Education and socialisation of children

The process of socialisation is operative not only in childhood, but throughout life. It is socialisation that turns a child into a useful member of the society and gives him social maturity. There are two sources of a child's socialisation. The first includes those who have authority over him; the second are those who are equal in authority to him. The first category may include parents, teachers, elderly persons, and the state. The second one includes playmates, friends etc.

The parents or the family are the first to socialise the child. They are not only closely related to the child but are also physically nearer to him than others. From the parents he learns his speech and language. Children are taught societal morality. They learn respect for persons in authority. In the family, children learn a number of civic virtues. The family is rightly called the cradle of social virtues. Children get their first lessons in cooperation, tolerance, self-sacrifice, love and affection in the family. The

environment of a family influences the growth of a child. Psychologists have shown that a person is what he becomes in a family. the earliest social stimuli to which a child is subjected come from the mother. But as the child's contacts widen, other persons such as the father, brothers and sisters, playmates, teachers etc., begin to mould his behaviour.

There are three elements, which play a part in the socialisation process of the individual. They are:

- i) The physical and psychological heritage of the individual.
- ii) The environment in which he is born.
- iii) The culture in which he is because of the action and interaction between these elements.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with those provided at the end of this unit.

2. Discuss at least two stages of family life.

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13.5 THE DYNAMICS OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

13.5.1 Migration & Adhoc/Temporary/Residential Separation

The term 'Separation' usually connotes family break-up and living apart. It is legalised by divorce, Separation as a result of migration, job transfers etc, is a matter of necessity and perforce convenience, and may be termed as temporary/adhoc separation. Being physically separated due to migration, only means living in separate residence, yet the happy marriage relationship continues. They remain a loving married couple. The spouses may visit each other whenever possible on weekends, holidays etc.

Migration is ordinarily defined as the relatively permanent movement of persons over a significant distance from their place of residence — usually place of birth. With respect to international migration, the United Nations has recommended removal for one year or more as permanent migration, while a stay for a shorter period is classified as a visit. In most of the supposed models of migration, it is presumed that movement is generated mainly by economic forces, and job opportunities. In both national and international migration, adolescents and young adults dominate. The young not only adapt easily to a new environment, but can also more readily take advantage of new opportunities.

Due to migration, there has been a significant increase in the urban population over

the years. In recent decades, the urban population has grown at an accelerating rate. Urbanisation has been a contributing factor to divorce. There are various causes for which migration and temporary separation take place. Let us see the causes of temporary separation and then we will analyse the consequences.

Causes of temporary separation

i) Economic factors

India has been a country largely of villages. Where there are no other means of improving one's economic condition other than the traditional ways and means of livelihood, one may opt for migration. People find better options for the betterment of one's economic conditions in the cities. With increase in the size of the family and no change in the size of agricultural land or the family business and scope for sustenance opportunities or occupations in the village, the surplus unemployed population migrates.

ii) Opportunities

More and more people are migrating into urban places where they can utilise their potential and earn more. Job opportunities and choice of a job of one's interest are more readily available in urban areas.

iii) Modernisation

Most of the people residing in the villages are bound by the family traditions and customs. In order to adapt to changed outlook, and break away from customs and traditions, some people migrate.

iv) Job transfers

Job transfers are also a major cause of migration or separation, especially for employed people. In most cases when job transfers in government services and allied sectors like the banking sector take place, the employees have to leave behind the spouses and the children, for convenience availability of residence, wife's job or children's education and other facilities and needs and their non-availability in the transferred place and occasionally visit them. The family life gets disturbed and transfers also affect children's education.

Difference between separation and bereavement

Death of a spouse or bereavement is surrounded by a number of rituals, ceremonies and obligations in part because death has always been viewed as an unwilled intrusion, an unwanted tragedy. Unlike divorce, bereavement does not create hostility towards the former spouse. Bereavement is a natural phenomenon, whereas, separation from one's spouse is intentional and has specific implications. Separation can take place due to many factors.

a) Job transfers

Separation due to transfers happens in most of the cases. The jobs which demand transfers are with government as well as private sector. It is not always possible to

take the family along while on transfer. For example, in the armed forces, individuals are transferred to non-family stations, which keep the person away from his/her family.

b) Procedure before Divorce

It is a legal procedure that a couple has to remain separated for a particular period of time before actually obtaining divorce. This is known as intentional separation. During this period, efforts also can be made to reunite the couple.

c) Mental Incompatibility

With growing urbanisation, and changes taking place in the societies, many changes have occurred in life-styles, expectations and aspirations, which lead to separation. The changing attitude in one's life has a negative effect on the lifestyles of people especially in countries being affected by globalisation.

d) Job Opportunities

With growing population, availing jobs within one's locality has become difficult due to which more and more people are migrating to different places within and outside the country. These people leave the family behind and stay alone. Some in-service personnel may go on study leave to a far away place for a year or so.

Consequences of Separation and bereavement

Separation from anything which is close to our hearts is painful, and many a time can be very frustrating. Separation and bereavement have many consequences, which harm a person emotionally, socially and economically. Let us study some of these consequences one by one:

- i) It causes frustration among the partners, as absence of the other partner causes disturbance in the normal routine and also increases work load. It also affects the children's education. If one falls sick, the trauma can be worse.
- ii) There is loss of mental support provided by the other partner, thus causing stress.
- iii) Bereavement or loss of one spouse is ranked as the topmost factor causing stress.
- iv) Feeling of failure and loss of identity develop among the partners in case of bereavement.
- v) Rise in crime among the children of the separated or divorced parents is common.
- vi) Depression.
- vii) Social unacceptance to some extent.
- viii) Economic troubles.
- ix) Extramarital relations, which can lead to further estrangement among the partners and acquiring emerging and re-emerging diseases.

Check Your Progress

Notes :a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

3. What are the various causes of temporary residential/adhoc separation?

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4. What are the consequences of temporary separation and bereavement?

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13.5.2 Family Disorganisation

In the broadest sense, family disorganisation may be thought to include any sort of non-harmonious functioning within the family. Thus, it may include not only the tensions between the husband and wife, but those arising between and among children and parents as well. Tensions between children and parents often present serious problems of adjustment. They result in friction and such disagreements may also result in tensions between husband and wife. However, the children's conflict with parents does not threaten the family organisation to so marked a degree as the conflict between husband and wife over trivial matters as well as fundamental social issues, which makes the rifts more serious leading to family disruption. Disruptions of the marriage relationship are occasioned by tensions between husband and wife. This conjugal relationship is the central bond uniting the family in any society. When this bond is broken, the family is then automatically broken. The existence of the family groups as a functioning unit depends upon the continuation of many personal relationships, which are reciprocal.

Family disorganisation in the external manifestation may take the form of desertion, separation, divorce, physical violence or use of abusive language. But these manifestations are only the superficial symptoms of a breakdown in the intimate relationships within the family. The legal or social function of a normal family life may be maintained even when these personal relationships are at a minimum. Family may continue to live under the same roof because of religious beliefs or economic or social motives. Similarly, the duty towards children or fear of disapproval of parents may keep them together. At the same time we must recognise that every normal family experiences difference conflicts, which it is expected to manage and overcome. However, as it has been pointed out earlier, tension in the family life is growing in the modern age because of rapid changes in the ideas about the role and status of the partners.

Divorce is the socially and legally recognised dissolution of marriage. Like marriage, it is governed by a variety of cultural and legal regulations that show how difficult it is to accomplish and the social and personal consequences it produces. Sometimes, the dissolution is by stages, for example, in a sequence of avoidance, suit for separate

maintenance, legal separation and finally an absolute divorce. A couple with high expectations of marital bliss but relatively little marital disorganisation may seek divorce as an exit from marriage. The demographic approach stresses the changing prevalence of divorce in various countries. In a finding by M. Le Balance in 1997, it was found that youths were more violent than thirty years ago and one reason for that was the breaking down of the family unit.

Sociologists have pointed out the similarities in the process of adjustment that are required by divorce or bereavement. In both, a set of role relations has been found to be disrupted and adjustments are required throughout the family network.

Each marriage relationship is unique in many ways. It is not always possible to find an appropriate replacement for the missing partner. Apparently, in all societies, the death of a spouse creates an obligation for kinfolk and friends to help the bereaved person, to offer solace and to make small or large gestures of support. In divorce, even when one spouse is very unhappy about the divorce, only very close friends may feel any obligation to offer emotional solace.

Divorce in various cultures and tribes

Obtaining divorce varies from culture to culture. Among muslims, divorce is only the husband's privilege, and he can have it even without assigning a cause. Divorce can be obtained by merely repeating three times the formula of repudiation (Talaq) in the presence of at least two witnesses. A husband has to pay 'meher', which is a settlement to the wife out of his property to compensate her in the event of divorce. Under certain circumstances, Islamic law does give a wife the permission of unilateral action.

In the case of Khasis, a tribe from Meghalaya, divorce is permitted for reasons of adultery, barrenness and incompatibility. The separation can take place only after mutual consent. There is no possibility of remarriage between two such people who have separated by divorce. The divorce is obtained in a public ceremony.

Among the Gonds (tribe), divorce can be obtained on grounds of marital infidelity, carelessness in household work, barrenness and quarrelsome disposition. The initiative may be taken either by a husband or wife.

The Kharias (tribe) allow divorce on grounds of marital infidelity, sterility, laziness, refusal of the wife to live with her husband and theft.

Among the Hindus, divorce can be obtained under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Among the Christians, there are two popularly known denominations, namely the Catholics, who owe allegiance to the Pope and Protestants. Catholics do not officially accept the possibility of divorce, though they accept the possibility of declaring a marriage annulled. This means that a marriage was right from the beginning null and void due to certain reasons like prior impotence, serious deception etc, protestants are more lenient with regard to the question of divorce and remarriage.

Causes of divorce

Let us try and find out the causes of divorce. Some people are less tied to marriage than others. Family functions, religious taboos or life-long commitment to parental roles may simply have less meaning for them. The door of divorce is more open to certain couples than to others because of lenient laws, encouragement of relatives,

opportunities for remarriage, and in general the prospect of freedom without the economic, religious and psychological penalties, which pose a threat for others. Let us analyse some of the major causes.

i) Modernisation

The disintegration of the family has been hastened by free sex relations made possible by changing notions about morals and by birth control techniques. The religious sanctions behind family and marriage are becoming diminished/have vanished, making dissolution easier.

In the past, the marriage ceremony used to be a family function, where the bond was between two families. With modernisation, the concept of couples going in for marriages by their own choice is becoming increasingly prevalent. With this type of marriage, though parents ultimately give their consent, the natural bond between the families does not always take place. This type of selecting one's own partner has its advantages and disadvantages with regard to the stability of marriage.

ii) Growing acceptance of change

Priorities have shifted even in a country like India where time bound traditions exist. Where the priority was the husband, it has now shifted to careers as far as woman is concerned. Previously the gender roles were defined and it was easier to conform to a stereotyped pattern. The inevitable liberation by the woman, her economic independence and western influences have given marriage a new outlook, especially among the educated urban dwellers.

iii) High personal aspirations

In modern industrial society, people are more ambitious than the people of traditional societies. They pursue their careers, sometimes even at the cost of their family life. Thus, family has taken a back seat. There has been a tremendous growth in individualism (happiness of oneself) at the cost of the family life. This has also led to low levels of toleration and patience besides growing egoism and false notions of self prestige.

iv) Growth of the nuclear family

As a result of urbanisation and industrialisation, the nuclear family came into existence. In the Indian perspective, the concept of family was always thought to be in terms of joint family system. In the joint families, children were given better attention. The attitude towards parents was mostly of respect and regard, and the younger looked towards their elders for guidance. All the family members were consulted on all important family matters. The joint family did not allow the neglect or disregard of elders. Individuation was not preferred and in this context, taking the option of divorce was not a hurried and individualised one. The parents played the role of mediator between the husband and wife. The beginning of the dissolution of the joint family system has brought about several larger issues and divorce is one of them.

v) Declining values

There has been a noted decline in the value system among people. You have already studied about the moral, ethical and personal values in some of the previous blocks of this programme of study.

vi) Physical separation

With more and more job opportunities away from home in the country and abroad, people are giving up the village life and migrating to big cities within and outside the country. It is well known that housing facilities is a big problem in the big cities and people cannot afford to take their families along with them. To satisfy their sexual urges, some men tend to take the help of other services like visiting brothels, which are easily available. These also tend to dissolve the family bonds.

Divorce and its effects

Any change from the present situation to another situation creates disruptions in life. Divorce can be though a solution and a sense of relief. The differences and disturbed relationships and conflicts of life and place is a devastating situation for both the partners. The partners who get united because of a shared goal or for proximity when faced with the actual situation of divorce, take some time to adjust to the new situation. While the divorce process is in progress, both parties are likely to be personally rejected, cheated in the economic arrangements, and feel lonely because they have lost a friend, and afraid of living alone.

This disrupting process gives rise to many behavioural changes among the partners and those who are also effected directly or indirectly by it. Let us examine some of these effects one by one.

1. Stress

Stress can be defined as a bodily and mental reaction that can occur in response to either internal, cognitive stimuli or external environmental stimuli. A stimulus that causes stress is known as a stressor. The stress which is experienced, consists of bodily responses headache, increased heart rate and blood pressure, dry mouth rapid breathing and so forth. The stressors producing these responses are our own internal reactions or comments of our friends and neighbours. Significant events such as change of job or targeted job requirements, conflicts with colleagues, competitiveness, marriage, death of a family member and divorce, disrupted normal life that cause more stress. These stressful life events may have negative effects on health. In a scale developed for ranking the stressful life events, divorce acquires the second rank; it has been rated as a chronic stressor. As stated earlier, stressful events lead the body to undergo several minor and major physiological changes. These changes are very important to understand because they can lower the body's resistance to diseases. The fact that many diseases are either caused by or made far worse by stress has been accepted by the medical practitioners as well. Even before the divorce is legalised, the partners have to undergo many legal steps, which are painful for them. All the more, it is a human tendency that after the process has been initiated, there is no turning back because it hurts the ego of the partners. The process of divorce somehow makes the partners think about their past, in which they remember the happy times as well. It creates mental stress among the partners, which is sometimes followed by physical stress.

2. Low self-esteem and a feeling of failure

The divorce sometimes leaves a negative effect of sense of failure and consequently reduced self-esteem on the partners. It can effect on performance in day-to-day activities.

3. Rise in aggressiveness or anger

Many a times the negative emotions may lead to the mental imbalance of the people, which can result in raised anger or aggression in the temperament.

4. Depression

Divorce has been rated as the second main cause of stress for the partners and their children. The process tires a person mentally as well as physically, sometimes resulting in depression and a sense of regret.

5. Rise in delinquency

It has been found through various studies that the major percentage of the delinquents and the rise in crime among young people result from children coming from broken homes or a single parent family. Marriage is strongly institutionalised, not just in India, but everywhere in the world and is a preferred context for intimate relations. Marriage offers stability, providing an atmosphere of love, encouragement, acceptance and trust. With the practice of divorce, all of these lose their meaning and leave a negative impact on the partners as well as the children. The close relatives of the partners also get affected by its negative impact.

Effects of divorce

We will discuss the effects of divorce under three broad headings given below:

- i) Effect on the children
- ii) Effect on the partners
- iii) Effect on the family
- i) Effect on the children

Children are the direct sufferers by the dissolution of the marriage. The incapability of adults to get along well affects the children negatively. Single parenting is a difficult situation for the child in all the stages of his/her growth. In the infancy stage, the child misses the affection of both the parents, as one of the parents, is not present and one parent may not be able to substitute the other. Children under the age of five may react with rage and grief. The older children grasp the situation better, but sometimes tend to blame themselves. The adolescents who themselves are in a situation of identity crisis feel socially embarrassed by the break-up. This deprivation of an affectionate relationship is most damaging in early childhood. Deprivation can ruin the self-concept of a child in childhood. It can show its implication in late adulthood too. Like a person who is hungry for food, a person starving for affection becomes irritable and unreasonable. Sometimes these emotional behaviours vary from mild irritability to severe psychoses. The specific effects of emotional deprivation are as follows:

Physical - The physical symptoms are restlessness, loss of appetite, quietness, general apathy and psychosomatic illness.

Social - The social behaviour of the child gets affected which results in handicaps in learning how to get along with people, lack of responsiveness to the advances of others, lack of co-operation and hostility towards others.

Emotional - The children of the divorced parents lack emotional responsiveness. They sometimes develop deep related feelings of insecurity, anti-social behaviour, restlessness, anxiety, temper tantrums and many other forms of maladaptive behaviours. Apart from these, many delinquents were and are found to be children from broken homes.

The separated/divorced partners should see to it that the children continue to love and be loved by both the parents. They meet the other partner from time to time, visit them or be visited so as to share mutual love and affection. The two partners after separation may, in the interest of children ought to control and restrain their adversarial feelings, and keep friendly relations within separate lives.

ii) Effect on partners

As stated earlier, divorce causes a devastating experience for both the partners. The two persons who have been hitherto sharing a common goal, separate, which gives an emotional as well as social shock to both of them. Emotional shock in terms of the habit of staying together, fulfilling the needs of each other, caring and the bond of love, which suddenly comes as a shock. Though the capability of adjusting oneself to a particular situation is a typical feature of the human species, divorce takes time; and many a times, the vacuum remains for a lifetime.

In Indian society, divorce is not welcomed wholeheartedly by most people. The process of divorce for a middle class family becomes socially intolerable. Among the lower socio-economic strata of the Indian society, permanent separation is not very common. Usually, people do not face the society's disapproval even if one leaves his/her present partner and starts living with another. Very often, they do not go for the legal process to obtain divorce. For middle class people, informal sanction of the society becomes very important. Queries about partner and children can be a source of mental tension for some time.

iii) Effect on the family

Divorce is predominantly an urban phenomenon. Regarding marriage, Kirkpatrick says, "the essence of the contract is consent with full expectation of exclusiveness and indissolubility". In other words the idea of marriage as sacred made it dissoluble. Though divorce takes place between the two partners, who united as a result of marriage, the family is also affected in the process.

The growing rate of divorce and the breaking down of the family unit is posing a societal problem. Family, which is the basic unit of the society, is negatively affected by the quitting of the partners from the marriage bond. Children, an important part of the family, are the worst sufferers of divorce. Even the parents of the divorcees face difficulty to cope up with the situation.

Other than the causes discussed above, some other factors like migration and subsequent separation also lead to divorce.

13.5.3 Reconstructing the Family

From the discussion so far, it is clear that the family has changed a good deal from what it was in the past and has assumed a new form presenting many social problems. We will now discuss a few ways that to move in the direction of reconstructing or reorganising the family.

Better marriages

In spirit of the challenge of changing concepts, growing sense of individuality and economic independence, marriage still remains the most important and essential familial institution. With the responsibilities and restrictions marriage entails, people voluntarily choose to live within the framework of the institution of marriage. Therefore, in the reconstruction of families we should first arrange for better marriages. Marriages concluded hastily without careful and mature thought are one of the chief causes of family discords leading to divorce. While love gives the push that keeps a marriage moving, it does not give the direction which comes from understanding and cooperation. The reconstruction of family lies within the realm of human attitudes. It is both a social institution and a bilateral relationship. The family is to be considered not merely a partnership but an institution socially necessary and sacred. The following can be considered the guideposts for a successful marriage:

- i) Building of a union that is just to both.
- ii) Decisions must be made on the basis of what is good for both, not on the basis of the selfish or narrow wish of either.
- iii) No demand should be made on the male that requires a drastic change of personality.
- iv) There should be no holding on to the present nor seeking to bring back the past. Each moment is good and new in itself.
- v) There should be a complete trust in each other.
- vi) There should be willingness to grow. Marriage is a joint effort of going on together that requires maturity.
- vii) There should be complete ethos of equality between the two, e.g., 'Only a housewife' should not be taken as a derogatory item.
- viii) One should develop tolerance, patience and forbearance so as to adjust to minor weaknesses of the other. Differences and conflicts be resolved by open dialogue. Egoism and sense of false prestige should not hinder smooth relations.
- ix) Honest efforts be made to understand each other, to avoid break-up. Help from elders, friends and if needed, professional counsellors may be taken before a decision of final break-up.
- x) Divorces should not be looked down upon by parents, relations and society. It need not be considered a blot on the family reputation.

Mental adjustment

Marital happiness is largely the result of mental adjustment between partners. Personality is the most crucial single factor in marital adjustment. If family is not to suffer disorganisation, every attempt must be made to bring about an adjustment of attitudes between the couple. According to Bogardus, a democratic family is "one in which the husband and wife share the authority more or less equally and according to a prearranged division of labour. It is a group whose life is based not primarily on the fear and force of authority, but on the drawing power of mutual respect and affection. Rational love rules." Mutual self sacrifice is the principle of a democratic

family. In it the members adjust naturally to each other's needs and to each other's problems. If parents can be trained in the principles of democratic parenthood and youth in the principles of rational marriages, the society will keep family as one of its stable institutions.

It is, however, to be remembered that although the modern family is faced with serious problems, it has, nevertheless also gained in many directions. The life of a woman need no longer be exhausted in the toils of child bearing and the household chores. The responsibility and devotion of both the parents in the upbringing of children is more fully compensated by the satisfaction which they add to their life.

Check Your Progress

Notes : a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those provided at the end of this unit.

5. Discuss the major causes of divorce.

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6. What are the effects of divorce on children? What should the divorcee parents do to save the children from adverse effects?

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7. Discuss in brief the ways of reconstructing the family.

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13.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have focussed on the significance of building and sustaining family realationships. We started our discussion by stating that although family has been regarded as the cornerstone of the society, dramatic changes in the character of family can be seen. Then we sought to understand relationships in general, and family relationships in particular.

We saw how family relationships and the culture and traditions related to them are held in strong significance. Among these family relationships we examined motherhood, fatherhood and parenthood. We further discussed the culture of life and its importance in preserving a value based society.

In the next part of the chapter, we discussed the various stages on family life, viz. marriage, birth and rearing of children, and education and socialisation of children.

We continued focusing on the other stages of family life under the next section on the dynamics of family relationship. Under this, we focused on issues as under:

- i) Migration and separation.
- ii) Family disorganisation, with a special focus on divorce; and
- iii) Reconstruction of the family.

13.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Discuss the significance of family relationships in the value formation in children
2. Describe the various stages of a family life.
3. Explain various ways of strengthening Indian family system.

13.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Ahuja, Ram (1993): *Indian Social Systems*, Rawat Publications: Jaipur and New Delhi.

Broom, et.al, Leonard (1981): *A Text with Adapted Readings*, Harper and Row Publishers Inc: New York.

Singh, Man Das and Panos D. Bardis (1978): *The Family in Asia*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi.

International Planned Parenthood Association (1985): *Growing Up in a Changing World, Part One, Youth Organisation and Family Life Education: An Introduction*, IPPF: London.

13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Family is a natural and constant institution in human and social life. Motherhood and fatherhood are therefore, constants and the family cannot be redefined. It exists as a norm in all societies except in cases which differ from this norm due to widowhood or single parent families as a result of divorce or separation. In fact, motherhood and fatherhood exist as archetypes of human existence with much more than mere biological qualities.
2. The two stages of family life are as follows:

- i) Marriage

Marriage is an institution which admits men and women to family life. It is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted to have children; the right to have children implying the right to sexual relations.

- ii) Education and Socialisation of children

The process of socialisation is operative not only in childhood, but throughout life. It is socialisation that turns a child into a useful member of the society and gives him social maturity.

3. The main causes of separation are:

- i) Migration
- ii) Economic Factors:
- iii) Opportunities
- iv) Modernisation
- v) Job transfers

4. Separation and bereavement have many consequences, which harm a person emotionally, socially and economically. Some of the main consequences are:

- i) It causes frustration among the partners, as absence of the other partner causes disturbance in the normal routine and also increases work load. It also affects the children's education. If one falls sick, the trauma can be worse.
- ii) There is loss of mental support provided by the other partner, thus causing stress.
- iii) Bereavement of loss of one spouse is ranked as the topmost factor causing stress.
- iv) Feeling of failure and loss of identity develop among the partners in case of bereavement.
- v) Rise in crime among the children of the separated or divorced parents is common.
- vi) Depression.
- vii) Social unacceptance to some extent.
- viii) Economic troubles.
- ix) Extramarital relations, which can lead to acquiring emerging and re-emerging diseases.

5. The major causes of divorce include:

- i) Modernisation
- ii) Growing Acceptance of Change
- iii) High Personal Aspirations
- iv) Growth of the Nuclear Family
- v) Declining Values
- vi) Physical Separation

6. The child suffers emotional deprivation due to the dissolution of marriage. The specific effects of emotional deprivation have been reported to be:

Physical - The physical symptoms are restlessness, loss of appetite, quietness, general apathy and psychosomatic illness.

Social - The social behaviour of the child gets affected which results in handicaps in learning how to get along with people, lack of responsiveness to the advances of others, lack of cooperation and hostility towards others.

Emotional - The children of the divorce parents lack emotional responsiveness. They sometimes develop deep related feelings of insecurity, anti-social behaviour, restlessness, anxiety, temper tantrums and many other forms of maladaptive behaviours. Apart from these, many delinquents were and are found to be children from broken homes.

7. **Better marriages and healthy mental adjustment** between the couples are the two ways of reconstructing the family. Marriages concluded hastily without careful and mature thought are one of the chief causes of family discords leading to divorce. Marriage should be solemnized by giving adequate time to people to take decision as it is a joint effort of going on together that requires maturity and mutual understanding.